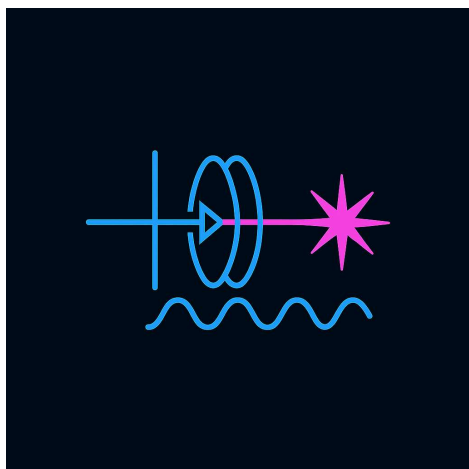




Fast Polarization Switch

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Chapter 1: Summary

Chapter 2: Project Description

2.1 Background and Motivation

In the world of semiconductor technology, light and its manipulation are at its core. Being able to harness the power of light is crucial to staying on top of this innovative environment. For our senior design project, we task ourselves with mastering polarization control with the utmost precision. This mastery, while some see it as merely scientific fun, we understand is crucial to the furthering of metrology, sensing, and overall analysis of the smallest technological systems. We plan to create a fast polarization switch, that we call Fast Polarization Switch, that utilizes the fascinating features of birefringent crystals. Through careful selection of this crystal, we will be able to rotate it in such a way to rapidly alter the polarization of input light. This technology, while new and innovative, will considerably change the state of semiconductor manufacturing with its precision and stability. In a world where computers control our ecosystem, from the bottom of the sea to the heavens upon the stars, our project will be involved in the steppingstones that will change our future.

Inside of academia, the class senior design is modeled after the real-world hardships engineers are faced with on a daily basis. This course is designed to challenge up and coming engineers to take what we have learned through our rigorous coursework and apply it to a product that will not only innovate but advance the technological world in a way that has never been done. As a team we must create a system that is reasonably accessible to our audience as well as fully capable of completing its intended goal. To do this our team must be highly skilled and coordinated, qualities that cannot be taught and must be achieved through dedication. This type of project is the best way to spring into the world of industry and prepare us for the upcoming problems we will face. This project, while useful, is a test of teamwork, knowledge, and commitment and will show those around us that we are prepared for what's to come.

The idea of Fast Polarization Switch came from ASML, a leader in the field of semiconductor technology. This collaboration not only challenges but also inspires us. We are challenged by the fact that we must live up to the high standards that come from working with a world leader in such innovative technology and inspired with the knowledge that the work we do here is being used to push the forefront of technology. With their insight into the newest technological advancements, they led us to the idea of using a rotating birefringent crystal as the cornerstone of a polarization switch. This idea will not only be technically challenging but also be immensely practically valuable in the world of metrology. With their guidance, Fast Polarization Switch will show the industry that we can provide a global impact in the same way ASML has for so long.

2.2 Features and Functionalities

The main functionality of our product is the ability to polarize light. This is done by using crystal and the properties of birefringence to change the refractive index of light as it passes through. This allows us to change the polarization of light by altering the angle at which the light is incident

upon the crystal. This will allow us to quickly and accurately change the polarization by just rotating our crystal on a rotation mount connected to a motor.

This can also act as a power modulator. By passing the polarized light through a polarized beam splitter, we are able to output a fraction of the input light's power. By changing the polarization, the amount that gets reflected will also change. As the polarization output from the crystal changes the polarization of the beam splitter, we will increase power and as we get further away from the polarizers set polarization our power will decrease. Using this functionality, our polarizing crystal can also effectively act as a power regulator.

Our system will be able to work with the entire visible light spectrum. Birefringent crystals are transparent over a large range, from UV to IR. This allows us to function across a wide wavelength range so our product can be used across a variety of applications. Our product is also thermally and mechanically stable. This stability comes from the fact that we will be using a double pass system for our crystal, meaning that we will pass light through the crystal twice. This will eliminate the beam distortions that may be induced from other polarization modulators, like electro-optic modulators. Also, because we are only mechanically moving the crystal and not changing the refractive index by changing the electric field across the crystal, like electro-optic modulators, we will not be drastically heating our crystal. This means we do not have to worry about any thermal instability that may come from this heating.

Our design will avoid the need for high power input. Unlike other polarization modulators that use voltage to control polarization we will be using solely mechanical sources. This decreases power consumption as we will not need a constant source of power to alter our light. Also, more importantly, since our product will be used in high sensitivity metrology applications, we will need our product to be as accurate as possible. By not using high voltage to control polarization we will not be worried about problems like RF interference or electronic noise. This will help us drastically increase sensitivity.

2.3 Past Projects

2.3.1 Basis Paper Summary

Fast Polarization Switch is based on prior work completed at the University of Physics, KAIST, in Korea. The title of their work “Double-pass rotating z-cut quartz plate as a rapidly variable waveplate” (Lee, Kwon et al. 2025) was published online through Optica. This work establishes the feasibility of our goals. Elucidating paths of improvement and highlighting the math used to back up their results as well. Specifically, the Jones matrices provided are used to determine the output polarization depending on rotation angle of the crystal, and the difference in angle between the optical axis and the fast axis. The double-pass alignment they use can be a basis for the system to implement fiber and negates the need to adjust the alignment based on wavelength changes. Easing the process of measuring different depths using varied wavelength sources or a frequency sweeping light source. With the characterization of their system establishing our baseline. We have clear basic objectives to achieve. Namely the ability to change the polarization between orthogonal states within a millisecond. With an extinction rate of 99.9% reducing the output power of their system by 30dB. Comparing their chosen z – cut uniaxial quartz plate to the more widely used Pockels Cells, in terms of the electro-optical effect. The quartz offered more thermal stability and was capable of handling higher power without damaging functionality. It's CTE or (Coefficient of

Thermal Expansion) being smaller when compared to typical EOM crystals reduces thermal lensing and optical degradation. Fully rotating polarization of the light within $\sim 0.7^\circ$ of controlled angular change. Noting that typical zero-order waveplates require a 45° rotation. This was the key factor in bringing the switching time to below a millisecond they remarked. Finally, they provide a way to suppress the angular vibrations that come from such quick movements. These insights are the integral components, gleaned from this work, that we utilized to complete our objectives. Further details on how each of these are going to be achieved will be explained below.

The beam that was used in the past project was characterized by divergence angle and beam waist, which was determined to 2.2 mm with a divergence angle of $100\mu\text{rads}$ they chose the (Cening optics, AR coated at 1064 nm) their crystal had a thickness of 10 mm with refractive indices of $n_o = 1.534$ and $n_e = 1.543$ at 1064 nm. The rotation of their crystal between 10° to 20° is used to measure and map changes in polarization. This offset from normal reduces back reflections. Their experiment showed that even within this range they were able to have full control over polarization and power. It also shows that the double pass configuration reduces the period by a half cycle, further lowering transition time between orthogonal polarization states. To verify its use in a wide wavelength range they not only tested at 1064 nm but also 671 nm again measuring power in both single and double pass configurations the comparisons held true, phase delay was slightly larger when comparing quartz angles to 1064 nm however the power showed similar variances with double – pass doubling the peaks and halving the period. The contrast for the 671 nm light increased with increased quartz angle, this was attributed to the AR coating being less effective and the back reflections playing a bigger role in the process.

One of the biggest hindrances to the use of quartz crystal as a variable wave plate has been the beam path shift. The comparison here between the two configurations showcase that the double-pass configuration due to the retro-reflection of the light shows no position shift in the reflected light. This can be proven using basic geometric optics. Where $D_o = \frac{d}{\cos \theta_o} \sin(\theta - \theta_o)$, $D_e = \frac{d}{\cos \theta_e} \sin(\theta - \theta_e)$ Here θ_o and θ_e can be found through Snell's law: $n_e \sin \theta_e = n \sin \theta = n_o \sin \theta_o$ to verify this in the double – pass set up they utilized a wave plate and a beam splitter, measuring the beam shift by looking at the position of the reflected beam from the beam splitter. Theorizing that due to negligible beam shifts, new opportunities for fiber coupling arise. They compared contrast in the single and double pass configuration between free space and the fiber coupled, comparisons were similar with contrast in the double pass being much higher. When comparing coupling efficiency, it was easy to see why. The efficiency was constant with varying quartz angle in the double pass. While the single pass suffered significantly increasing losses with higher quartz angle.

To experimentally prove the validity of rapid power conversion they use a pulse which rotates the crystal to an orthogonal state, in the double pass setup. With a rotation interval $\theta_f - \theta_i = 0.7^\circ$. Starting in the off position they find the pulse brings the output light to its full power within a millisecond. The pulse they used did cause some vibration in the crystal due to the stopping motion. They stated that this could be mitigated by shaping the pulse. Although their method increased the time to power conversion to 2.5ms. The rotator chosen could operate with an input sinewave signal with frequencies up to 300 Hz, this limit is due to its mechanical nature. Characterizing the power conversion in their experiment by measuring the power ratio between two polarizations in the double pass design. Calculating conversion ratio with $R_p = (P_{\max} - P_{\text{bg}})/(P_{\min} - P_{\text{bg}})$ where

$P_{\max}$ and $P_{\min}$ are maximum and minimum power, P_{bg} is the background noise. They find the conversion ratio to be about 1000. They also determined the tolerance in offset of their retro-reflective mirror. Finding the ratio to stay above 900 when the degree change stayed between $\pm 0.015^\circ$ from the apex. They find a peak beam shift displacement of $9.1\mu\text{m}$, expecting a beam shift less than $9.3\mu\text{m}$, these are both unnoticeable when related to the beam diameter of 2.2 mm. Due to the rapid rotation and stopping there are vibrations in the angle of the quartz, causing erratic changes in power. They studied these power shifts by studying the shift in beam position at the stopping angle, in the single pass setup. This method led to more accurate extrapolation of these differences, and lead them to find that these power fluctuations due to stopping are less than 0.1%, furthermore finding that this holds true for various types of input signals they determine that the noise level introduced by their specific operating system is low enough that their system could be used in atomic quantum simulating platforms.

The team at the University of Physics, KAIST, in Korea, was able to demonstrate that implementing a rotating z-cut quartz plate in a double-pass configuration was not only possible but could push the boundaries on tolerances and what these types of EOM systems are capable of. Highlighting its application for systems that require larger beam sizes, unable to be addressed by acousto-optic modulators. The system they created is fast, precise, with a full range of control over polarization, and intensity. With this paper as the backbone to our project we were able to not only meet those goals and objectives but push beyond.

2.3.2 History of Birefringent Crystals as Optical Modulators

The use of birefringent crystals as waveplates in optics has been documented for well over 50 years. Originally utilized as a retardation plate in 1964. Exact equations describing the phase difference and the electric field of the outgoing light were discovered using Maxwell's equations. Providing conventional solutions for calcite and quartz. Even going so far as to discuss Quartz as a quarter wave-plate and applying it to the investigation of elliptical polarization. Exploring it for the case of a monochromatic plane wave that is normally incident and briefly comparing some oblique incidences. (Holmes 1964) Later on in the "Handbook of optical constants of solids: Handbook of thermo-optic coefficients of optical materials with applications." Which came out in 1998 (Ghosh 1998) here Ghosh went into more detail on how to apply quarter – wave retardation plate as a polarizer, amongst others. Continuing in Volume 1 Section 12.7, the book references a few different ways of solving the polarization of outgoing light, using matrix mathematics and further describing the difference between positive and negative uniaxial crystals. A wonderful reference involving the finer details of Jones matrix calculations was included in this section as well.

In 2016 something akin to the single-pass setup was used to characterize the crystal using a polarizer and analyzer both orientated at a 45° angle to the crystal to maximize the power drop. Then rotating the crystal, they saw how the power fluctuated. Analyzing the data and using Jones matrices they were able to determine the angular orientation of the crystals Optical axis. (Paranin 2016) As well as Ghosh et al. in 1999 go over characterization of calcite and quartz crystals highlighting that the refractive indices. Quoting "The extraordinary and ordinary indices of refraction of the crystal are fundamental parameters to have when applying such a crystal to any optical device or system." (Ghosh 1999) These parameters were provided for both crystals as tables showing the respective indices across a variety of wavelengths. Further claiming that the progress

made during that work would be foundational in discovering a standardized equation representing the birefringence of all other uniaxial crystals. (Tables to be Included in Appendix.)

2.3.3 Use of Double – Pass set up to Characterize a PSA

A paper written in 2012 uses the double pass technique to characterize a PSA (polarization state analyzer). Fascinatingly it only uses the PSA and no other polarizing element to do the characterization. Further demonstrating the possibility of this technique used to design broadband high-resolution spectropolarimetric systems. Claiming the system can be used to find the parameters of any chromatic retarder. (Zallat, Torzynski et al. 2012) This discovery in combination with the work done in the prior papers we looked into is what made us believe we can make a self-calibrating system that can work with any composition of birefringent crystal given the proper thickness. Being able to insert any crystal the right orientation and running a calibration protocol, it was possible to make our system find the minimum rotation needed to switch polarizations between orthogonal states. Allowing for more adaptability into various other applications.

2.4 Goals and Objectives

The idea of this project is to build a device that takes input light and produces light of a specific chosen polarization. Our goals and objectives are listed below.

Basic Goals

- Build a device to take in visible light and polarize it at the desired speed.

Achieving the desired speed of polarization is dependent solely on the motor speed. After inputting the desired polarization into the GUI, the system should know exactly how much the crystal needs to rotate to be able to output the desired polarization and then it needs to calculate how long it takes to activate the motor for the crystal to be in the location required. After this calculation the system will turn on the motor for the desired time and speed to rotate this crystal to the exact angle to achieve desired polarization. The wavelength range for our system needs to be between 500 and 800nm.

- Be able to produce any linear polarization desired

This goal relies solely on the crystal selected. We needed to pick a crystal such that we can achieve the angle of rotation for the desired polarization. This selection should be thought out carefully as choosing a crystal will decide how much is needed to rotate to achieve the full polarization spectrum and the larger this rotation angle is then the larger our device will need to be to be able to rotate. Also, if the angle needed to achieve the full spectrum is too small, we may not be able to rotate the crystal precisely enough to achieve this goal which would mean we would need a higher price for our motor.

Advanced Goals

- Polarize input light that has a bandwidth of 30nm.

For this goal we would like to be able to polarize light sources with a small bandwidth of at maximum 30nm. The system should be able to maintain a high extinction ratio and still do this in the allotted time of under 1 millisecond.

- Maintain accuracy for long term use

For this goal, our system will have MTBF (Mean time between Failures) comparable to if not better than other polarization-based modulators.

Stretch Goals

- Operate with two different light source wavelengths at the same time

We would like to operate our system with two different light sources with different wavelengths at the same time while maintaining 80% of our extinction rate. These light sources would be at wavelengths separated by more than 100nm.

- Enable polarization modulation continuously

Allow the user to input a steady change between polarization states and the speed of change. This would allow the user to experience different polarizations without having to use several inputs into the system.

We can create specific objectives to be able to achieve these goals. These objectives are listed below.

Basic Objectives

- Switch between linear orthogonal polarizations in under 1ms

For this objective we will need a highly accurate motor and driver. This is because the computer will have to calculate the desired angle of incidence the crystal needs to achieve the chosen polarization.

- Have an extinction ratio of 1000:1

This means that when we check our output power from our polarizing beam splitter, we should be able to have a maximum power that is 1000 times higher than our minimum power. To do this, we need to have a highly accurate polarizing beam splitter. If the splitter has a low extinction rate, then we will not be able to accurately measure the crystals extinction rate as the PBS's extinction rate will be limiting the crystal.

- Works with a wavelength range of between 500-800nm

This device will be used with a range in the visible spectrum. This means we need to be able to accurately adjust the angle of incidence needed for a specific wavelength in this range.

- Build the switching mechanism for under \$7,000

This is the budget we were given by ASML. This budget includes everything that goes into making the polarizer, but not the sources or power meter. This means we will be able to use money from outside of this budget to buy light sources and testing equipment like a power meter.

Advanced Objectives

- Route light source output through fiber for extreme stability

For this objective we would like to send our light output into fiber and then into the power detector. This would allow us to show that our device is stable and allow for easy routing of output light for the actual product, since in the product the power detector would not be needed. The user would simply have the output light from a fiber.

- Able to handle powers of up to 50mW

Our system should be able to handle a light source of 50mW. It should keep its extinction rate at 1000:1 even at light sources of up to 50mW.

- Create a GUI to control polarization state and which light sources to use.

For this objective we create a user interface to easily control the polarization the user wants and which lasers they want to turn on. The user would input a polarization, and the system would take this input and be able to calculate the time and speed of rotation for our motor.

Stretch Objectives

- Create arbitrary polarization states

For this objective we would like to be able to create circular and elliptical polarization states. This would allow the user to have greater control over their polarizations and be able to hit every polarization state on the Poincaré sphere.

- Allow crystal swapping

For this objective, we would use a mount that would allow us to remove the crystal and swap it for another one. This means we could use crystals that are designed for wavelengths out of our range and allow us to change crystal thickness for desired effects. This drastically increases the versatility of our system.

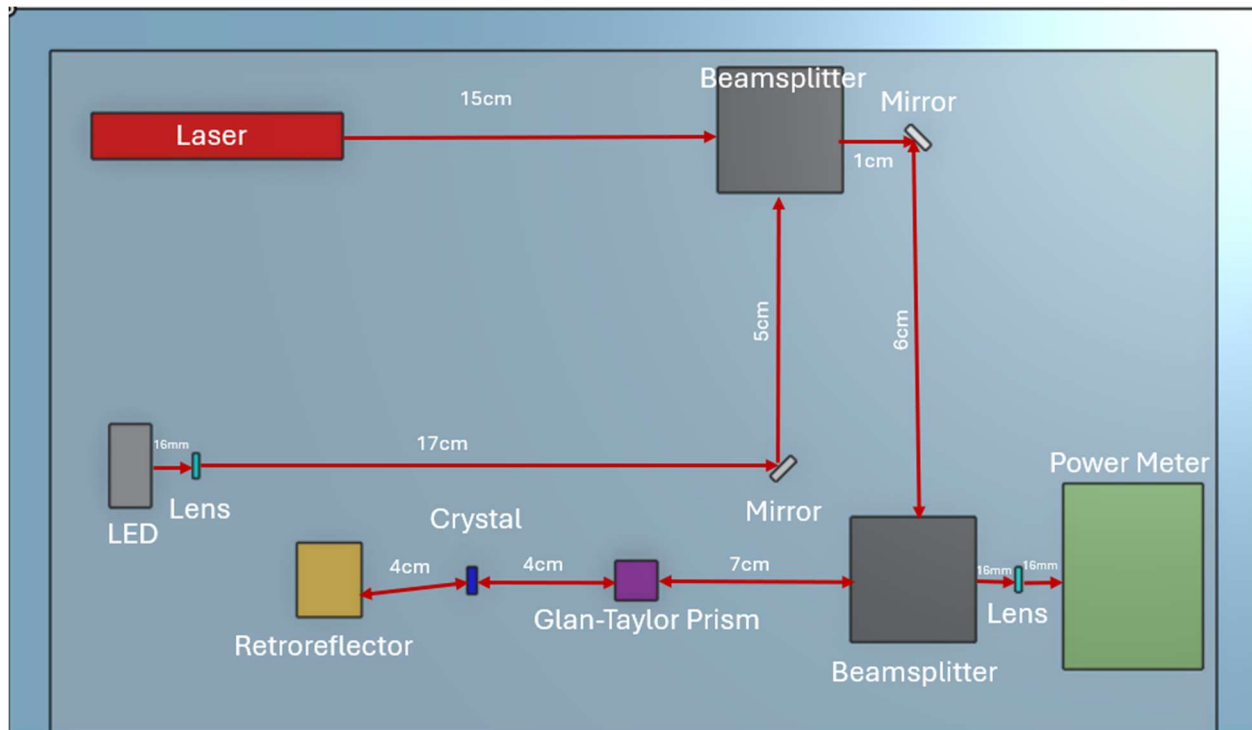


Figure 2.5.1 Optical design diagram is shown above. This demonstrates the core optical setup that will be used to achieve our goals and objectives for this project. The red arrows indicate the laser direction of travel originating at the laser component.

2.5 Specifications

Table 2.5.1 System Specifications

Parameter	Description	Specification
Power Consumption	How much power our system will consume on average with normal use.	≤ 750 W
User Input to Output Measurement Time	The time it takes from the user to input a power reading from our system	≤ 3 seconds
Extinction Ratio Precision	This describes the precision of our polarization. This ratio describes the number of photons in the desired polarization to the photons with an orthogonal polarization	1000:1
Motor Precision	This is the percent error we can expect when we use the motor.	$\pm 0.005^\circ$

Switching Time	This describes the time it takes for the motor to rotate the crystal to the position where the light is orthogonally polarized to the position we just left.	≤ 5 millisecond
Optical (Output) Power	This is the amount of power that will be detected by the photodetector after passing through the system.	Maximum 20 mW
Wavelength Range	This is the acceptable wavelengths for optimal use of our system	400 nm to 700 nm
Polarization Range	These are the polarization states that a user can input into the system and obtain an orthogonal output	0° to 180°
Step Response time	This is the amount of time for the motor to take one step towards the end distance it needs to travel	500 μ s
Total Cost of Polarization Switch	This is the cost of the polarization switch. This does not include light sources or power detector.	< \$7,000

Table 2.5.2 Component Specifications

Component(s)	Parameter	Specification
Electrical		
3.3 V Regulator	a) Max Output Current b) Max DC Input Voltage c) Min Output Voltage d) Max Output Voltage	a) 800 mA b) 15 V c) 3.267 V d) 3.333 V
5 V Regulator	a) Max Output Current b) Max DC Input Voltage c) Min Output Voltage d) Max Output Voltage	a) 1.5 A b) 35 V c) 4.8 V d) 5.2 V
Microcontroller (ESP32-S3 Series)	a) Max Output Current b) Average Output Current	a) 1500 mA b) 500 mA
Motor Driver (L298N Dual H-Bridge)	a) Input Voltage Range b) Output Voltage Range c) Peak Current d) Input Current Range	a) 3.2 V to 40 V b) 5 V to 35 V c) 2 A d) 0 to 36 mA

	e) Max Power Consumption	e) 20 W
Motor (TBA)	a) Angle Range b) Step Size c) Speed d) Torque	a) 0° to 20° b) $\leq 0.1^\circ$ c) $\geq 1,000$ rpm d) TBD
Optics		
520 nm Compact Laser	a) Wavelength b) Output Power c) Size d) Beam Diameter e) Operating Voltage f) Operating Current g) Divergence	a) 520 nm b) 0.9 mW c) 11 mm x 60.2 mm d) 3 mm e) 4.9 V f) 80 mA g) -0.6 mrad
635 nm Compact Laser	a) Wavelength b) Output Power c) Size d) Beam Diameter e) Operating Voltage f) Operating Current g) Divergence	a) 635 nm b) 0.9 mW c) 11 mm x 60.2 mm d) 3 mm e) 4.9 V f) 70 mA g) -0.6 mrad
LED	a) Wavelength Peak b) Emitter Dimensions c) Dimensions d) Lifetime e) Output Power f) Forward Voltage g) Maximum Current h) Full Angle Divergence i) Bandwidth	a) 470 nm b) 2 mm x 1 mm c) 30.5 mm Diameter d) >100,000 Hours e) 1161.7 mW f) 3.8 V g) 1000 mA h) 80 Degrees i) 28 nm
Plano-Convex Condenser Lens	a) Focal Length b) Wavelength Range c) Material d) Dimensions	a) 10 mm b) 350 nm x 700 nm c) N-BK7 d) 6 mm Diameter
Beam Splitter	a) Wavelength Range b) Size c) Split Ratio	a) 400 nm – 700 nm b) 30 mm x 16 mm c) 50:50
Retroreflector	a) Wavelength Range b) Diameter	a) 350 – 2000nm b) 10 mm
Photo Diode	a) Wavelength Range b) Aperture Size c) Dimensions d) Power Range	a) 400 – 1100 nm b) 9.5 mm Diameter c) 30.5 mm x 12.7 mm d) 50 nW – 50 mW
Power Meter Console	a) Dimensions b) Wavelength Range c) Power Range d) Repetition Rate	a) 180 mm x 38 mm b) 185 nm – 25 μ m c) 100 pW – 200 W d) 3 kHz

	e) Bandwidth	e) DC – 100 kHz
Glan-Taylor Prism	a) Wavelength Range b) Aperture Size c) Extinction Ratio d) Dimensions	a) 350 nm – 700 nm b) 5 mm x 5 mm c) 100,000:1 d) 9.5 mm x 9.5 mm
Mirror	a) Diameter b) Reflectance c) Material d) Wavelength Range	a) 7 mm b) > 99% (400 – 750 nm) c) Fused Silica d) 400 nm – 750 nm
Crystal	a) Thickness b) Refractive Indices c) Absorption Spectra	TBD TBD TBD

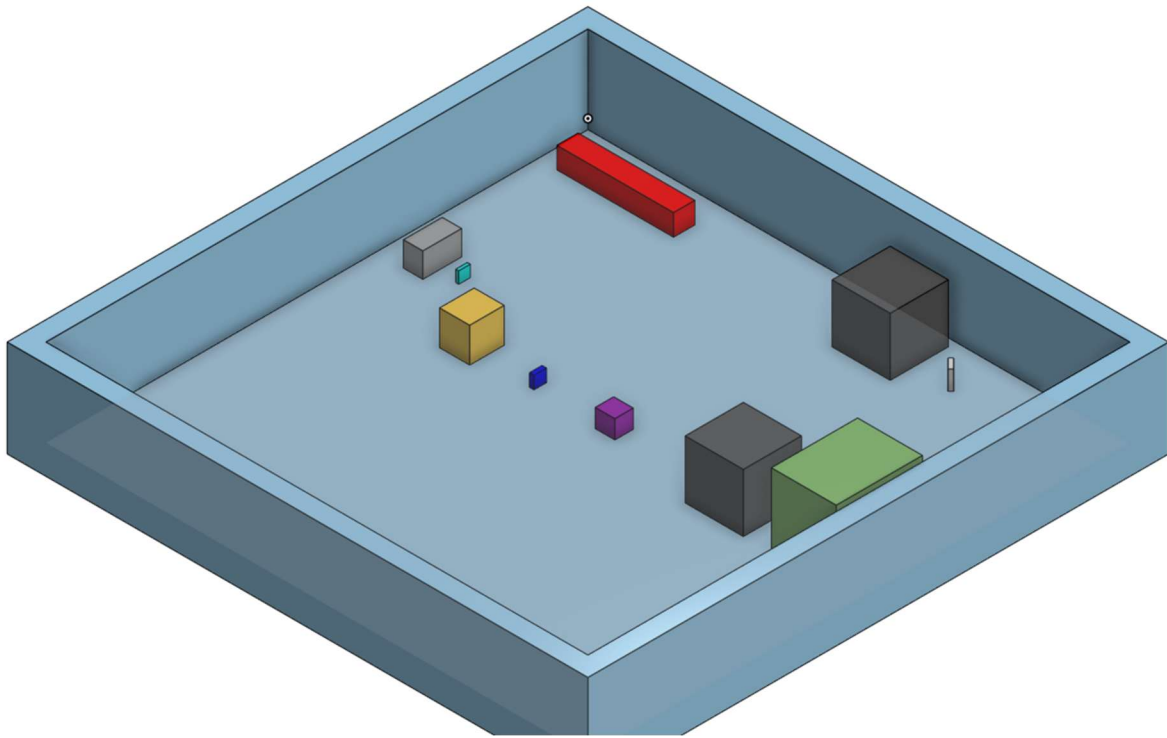
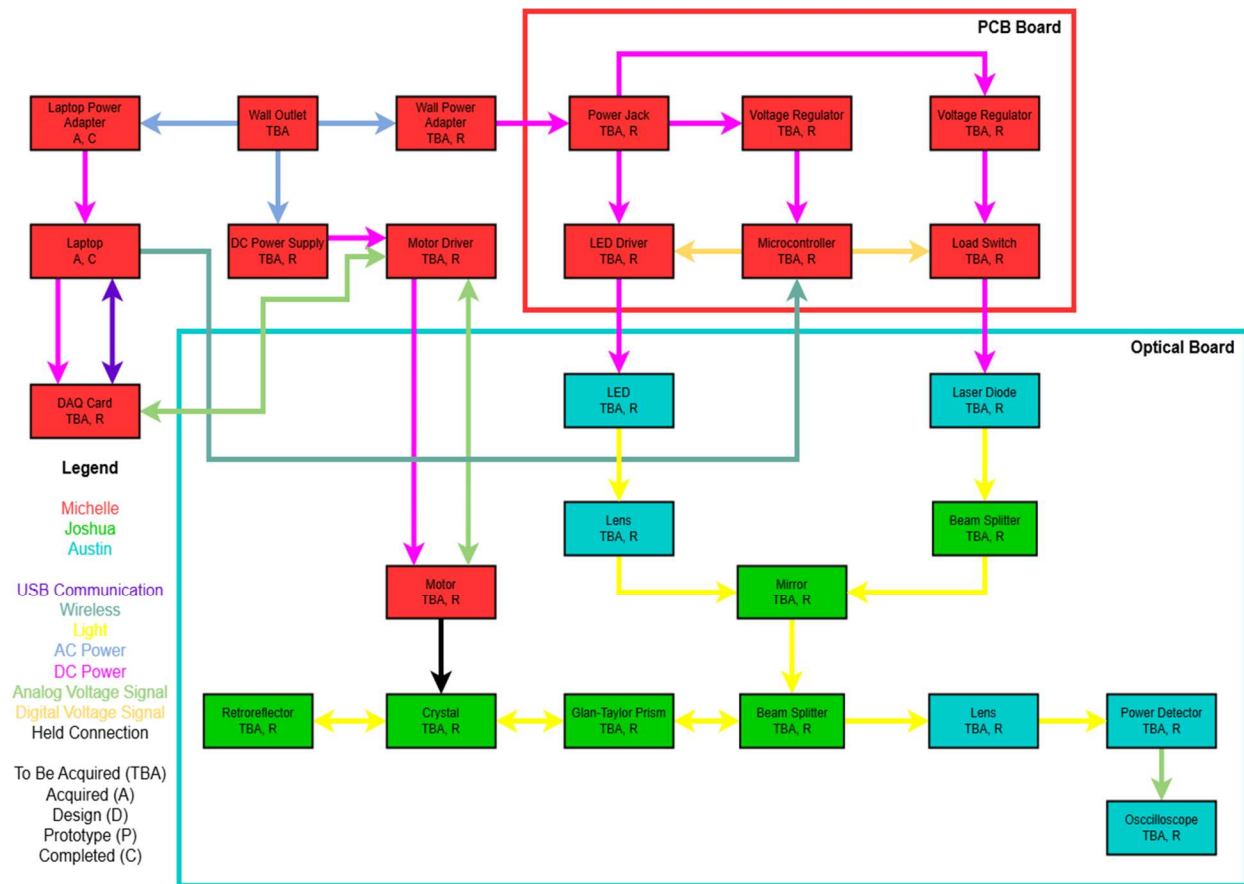
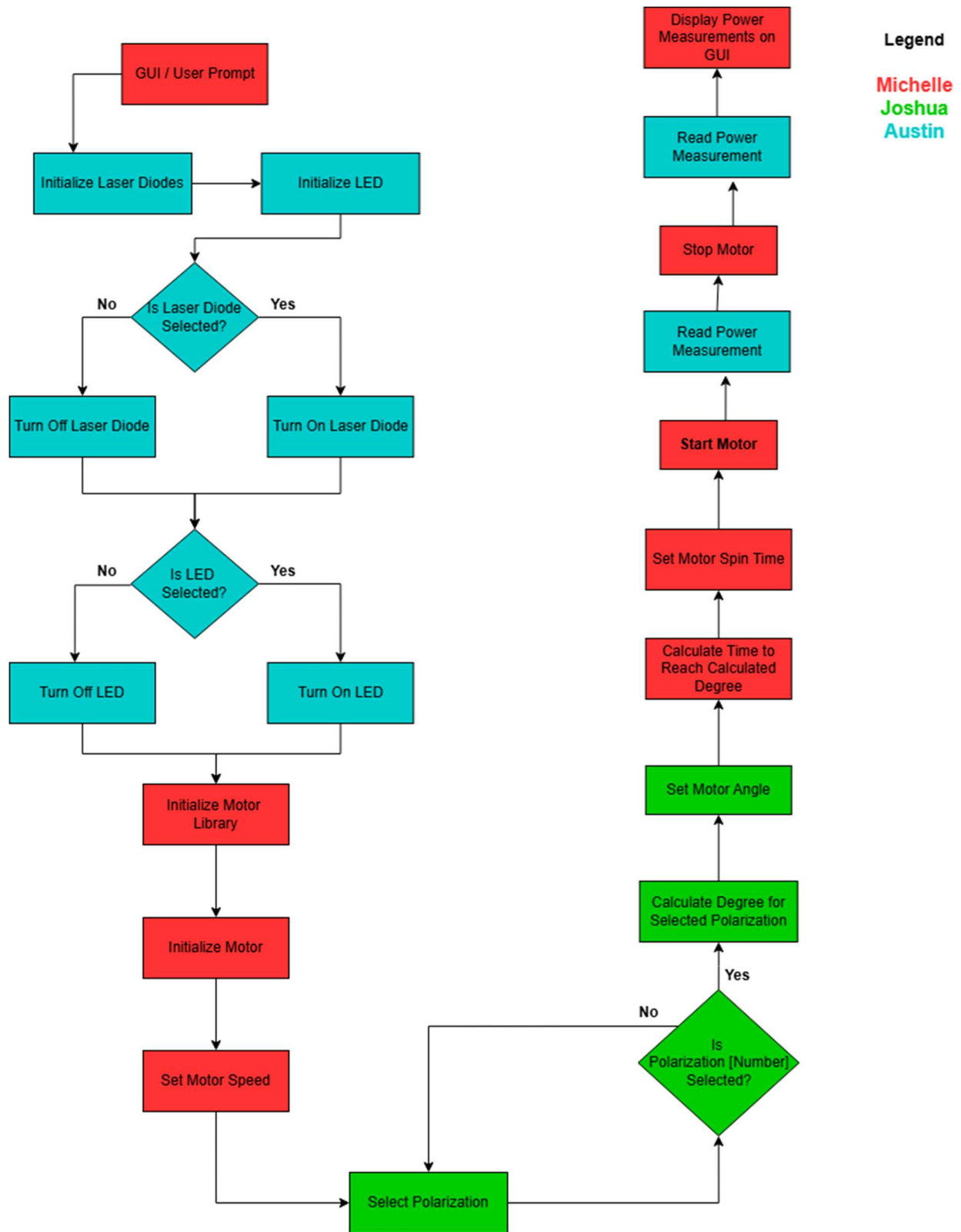


Figure 2.5.2-2.5.3 Prototype Illustration is shown above. This illustration is the general layout we will be using inside the housing of our system.



2.5.4 Hardware Diagram. This diagram shows how the components of our system will interact to ultimately produce our end goals. The colors of each block indicate the student tasked with researching and designing that component. The colors of each arrow indicate the connection between components.



2.5.5 Software Diagram. This diagram shows how the software of our project will interact in the final prototype. The color of the boxes indicates who oversees which section of the software. The arrows indicate the timeline of events.

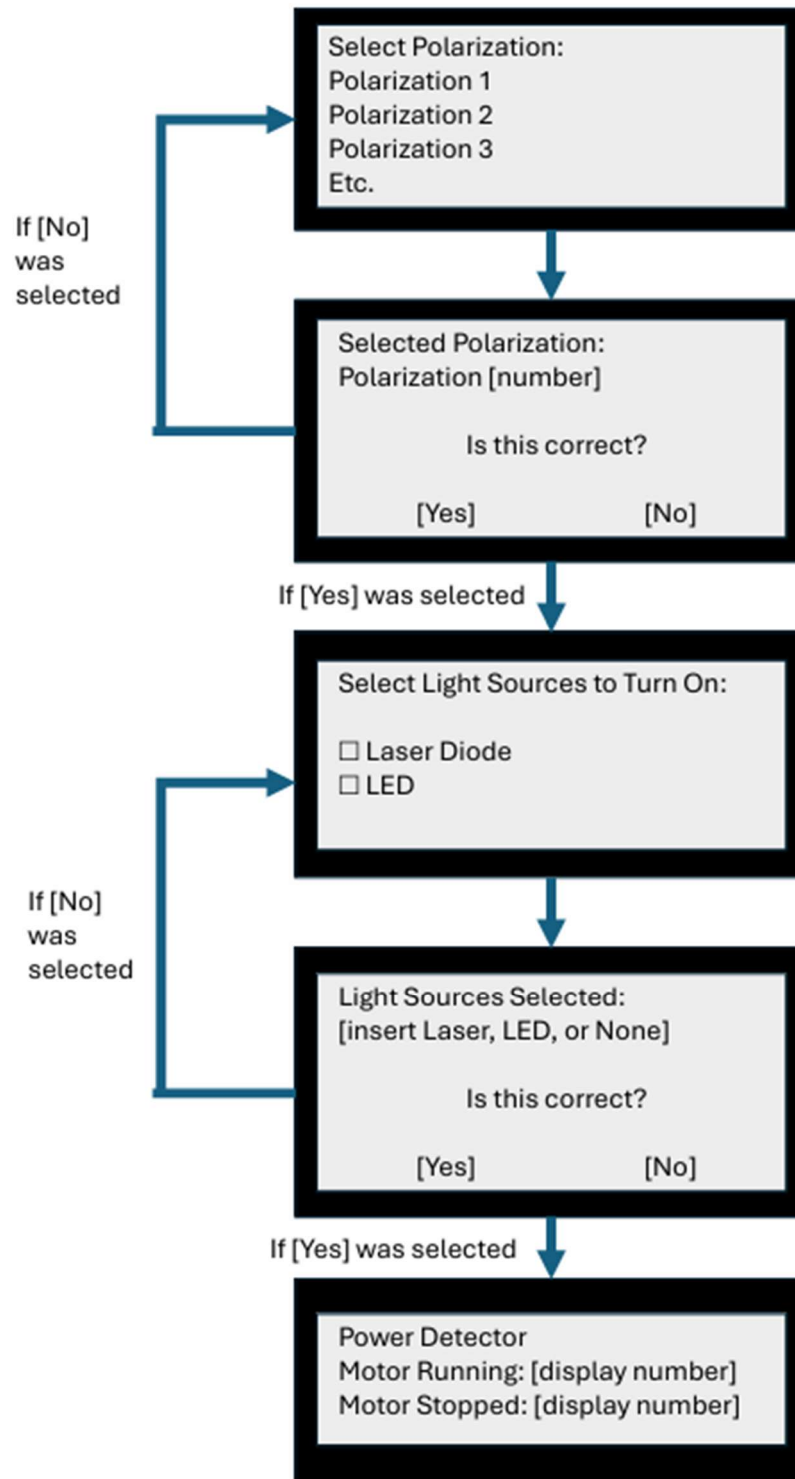


Figure 2.5.6 User Interface Diagram. This diagram shows how the GUI will function and the prompts it will give to the users.

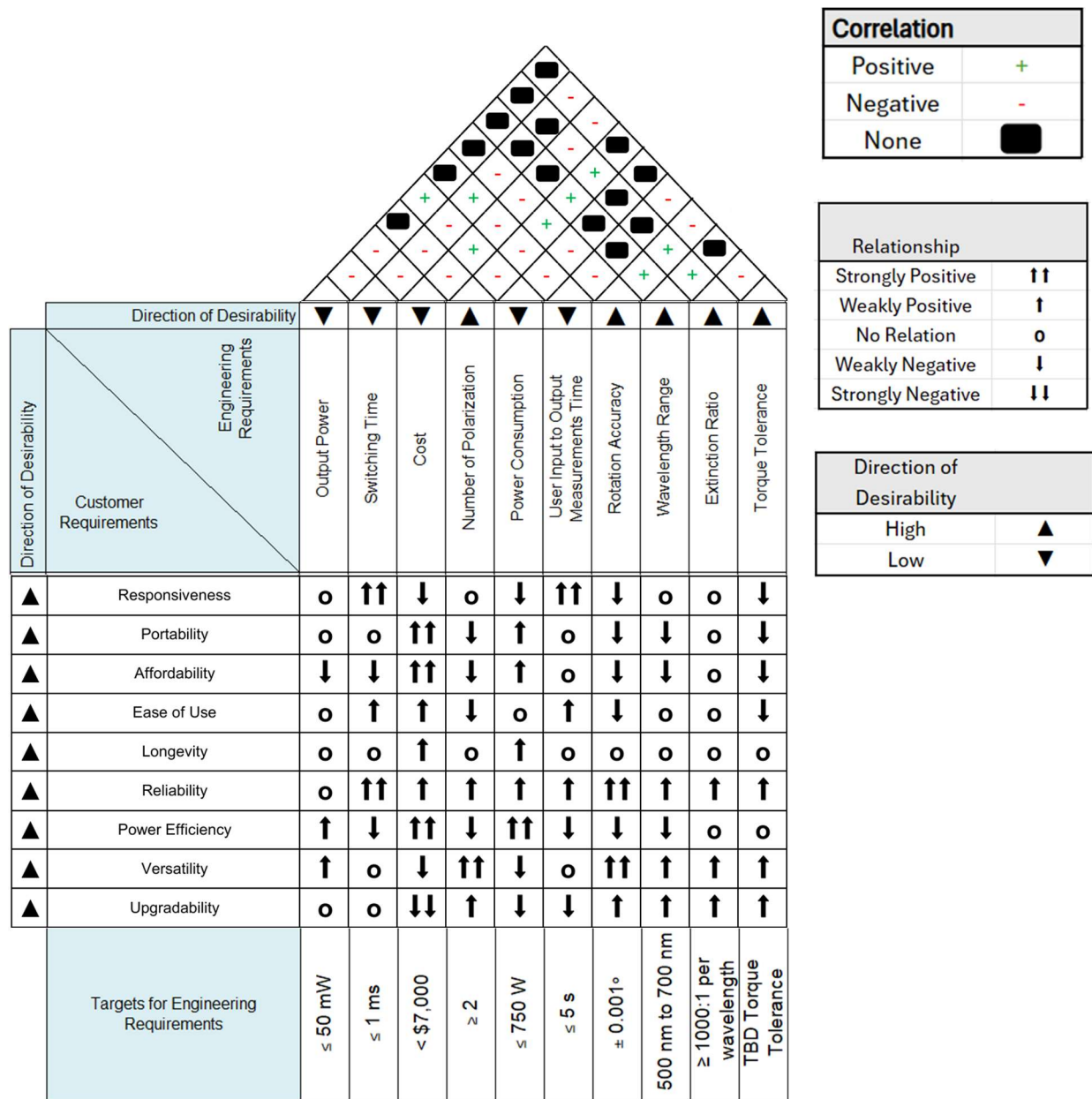


Figure 2.5.7 House of Quality. This figure provides a visual aid of engineering tradeoffs for the project. The left-handed column is the requirements important to the user. The top column indicates product requirements that we may need to make tradeoffs for.

Chapter 3: Research

3.1 Technologies

3.1.1 Light Sources

3.1.1.1 LED VS Laser

For our light source there is a choice between using light emitting diodes (LEDs) or using laser light. There are several advantages and disadvantages to either source. We also must consider the needs of our sponsor.

LEDs are a type of semiconductor technology. This device has two different regions known as the N-type and P-type. The N-type portion of this technology contains atoms that contain more valence electrons than the P-type which has more atoms that have less valence electrons. When these two parts combine the valence electrons of the N-type recombine with the holes of the P-type material. When these two combine the high energy electron gives off energy in the form of light. The energy and subsequent color of this light is based on the energy distance between the valence band and the band under it called the conduction band. This makes LEDs an efficient lighting technology because it can be turned on almost instantly unlike incandescent bulbs that need to heat up. Since these diodes only need to pump enough electrons into the N-type material to keep a steady flow of electrons in the valence band on the N-side, they are an energy efficient and fast device (Yam 2005). LEDs naturally have a broad linewidth because the semiconductor material has several thousand atoms that all have their valence bands at slightly different energy levels (Ojeda 1997). This means that as then electrons go from valence band to conduction band there is a bit different amount of energy that each electron must lose depending on the atom's valence band energy. When this effect is combined from several thousand atoms you get LEDs that have very large bandwidths.

Laser diodes work in a similar way to LEDs in the fact that they are also made of an N-type and P-type material. They are also similar in the fact that light gets created when the electrons and holes recombine in their respective material. The differences come from what happens when the light tries to escape the material. In a laser there are two mirrors set up on either side of the semiconductor creating a cavity. In this cavity one photon will get emitted like before, called spontaneous emission. As this photon is travelling through the cavity it will be passing through a gain material. This material amplifies photons as they pass through. To do this it is filled with excited electrons. As the light passes through this material the photons induce the excited electrons to begin to recombine with the holes in the gain material and then release light (Slusher 1999). These photons are an exact copy of the original passing photon in terms of wavelength, direction of propagation, and polarization. This process is called stimulated emission. These amplified photons will then reflect off one of the mirrors that create the cavity and make another trip through the gain material which amplifies them again. To release the light from the cavity one of the mirrors is not fully reflective. This means that some of the light escapes as it hits this mirror. Light moves so fast that it hits this slightly transparent mirror many times and effectively escapes after several trips, but because it has amplified so many times and there are so many photons being created there is a steady stream of light. To ensure this system works the user just needs to make sure that the gain material is constantly having a steady flow of electrons in its valence band. Since lasers use stimulated emission as their source of light the light that comes out of them have a very narrow linewidth in terms of wavelength. They also are a coherent source (Ojeda 1997).

Lasers come with several pros and cons. The pros of using a laser light source are that the light is mostly collimated. Laser lights being highly directional is mostly collimated and do not diverge much. This means we would not have to use lenses to collimate the light that comes out of the laser before it goes into our system. This would save us money. Also, we could use specialty lasers called fiber lasers that use doped fiber as a gain medium. This would mean our laser light is already coupled into fiber making the light much easier to work with. Laser light is also monochromatic, with a very small bandwidth (Ojeda 1997). This property of the light would make calculating the angle needed for our motor to turn much easier. Each wavelength of light will need a different incident angle to achieve the correct polarization. Using a light source that is monochromatic makes this calculation much easier as we will not have to calculate the angle for an entire range of wavelengths but only one. The cons of using laser light are also lengthy. Firstly, high quality lasers and drivers are extremely expensive. We are trying to make our system cheaper than others so including a light source that is expensive is a problem. Next, because most light is not monochromatic and collimated our system would not be as general if we use a laser light source. If our product goes into the market and has only been using monochromatic sources, it will not be adaptable for sources with a broad wavelength range. This would force the product to be used solely with lasers and could not be adapted to LEDs unless the software was changed. Lasers are also high-power consumers. This raises the cost of using the product as it costs more power than if we used the alternative light source.

LEDs solve many of the problems that are created by lasers. Firstly, LEDs are inexpensive. This drastically cuts down on the cost of our system by using LEDs instead of laser light sources. LEDs are often broadband sources. One of our goals is to use the product with a light source that has a bandwidth of 30nm. This is much easier to accomplish than laser light because LEDs have a naturally broader bandwidth than lasers. Instead of using multiple lasers to achieve this goal we could use one LED. To achieve a narrower bandwidth, we can use a bandpass filter. LEDs also use much less power than lasers, allowing us to cut cost of operation. One of the drawbacks of LEDs is that the light is not collimated. This ensures that we need to buy extra lenses to collimate the light. The cost of lenses does not outweigh the cost of lasers and their drivers. Also, using LEDs means we need to purchase a narrow bandpass filter if we want to test our device with singular wavelengths. This can significantly hurt our budget because extremely narrow bandpass filters come at a high price.

Table 3.1.1.1 Source Type Comparison

Criteria	Laser	LED
Low Power Consumption		X
Ease of Use	X	
Cost		X

30nm Bandwidth		X
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3.1.1.2 Why LED and Laser

We have chosen to use both lasers and LEDs. If we use these technologies properly we can highlight the strengths of each and lessen their disadvantages. Cheaper laser diodes will allow for ease of use of the laser with a minimal cost. We will use these sources to test our visible spectrum range since this source has an extremely narrow bandwidth. We will then use a single higher power LED to test if our system works for a broadband source. When we are looking for specific LEDs we will be looking for:

- Low Cost
- High Power- at least 20mW
- Broad Bandwidth- at least 30nm, not more than 50nm

When we are looking for a laser, we are looking for:

- Low Cost
- Narrow Bandwidth – 10nm
- Wavelengths – Entire Visible Spectrum
- Ease of Use

3.1.1.3 599 SMD LED

These types of LEDs are small and packaged and come from Dialight. They are made of mostly indium gallium nitride. There are a couple of options with the 599 series that include single-color LEDs, bicolor microLEDs, and single pixel LEDs. These LEDs have a small full width half max (FWHM) wavelength, normally around 15nm. They come in several different colors in the visible spectrum from red to blue.

3.1.1.4 MWUVL1

This type of LED is from ThorLabs and emits white light. It is mounted on a heat sink to keep a constant temperature and ensure no optical losses. The emission spectrum peaks at 400nm but also has a large portion of the spectrum in the 600nm area. This would mean for this diode we would need a bandpass filter to narrow our spectrum to around 30nm bandwidth. It outputs 338mW of typical power so the losses from filtering will not affect our goal of a high-power system.

3.1.1.5 LED560L

This type of LED also comes from ThorLabs and is the simplest kind of LED. It is not mounted. It operates at a single wavelength with a bandwidth of 11nm. It has an optical power of 0.15mW. It has a current input max of 50mA and a large operating temperature of less than 80 degrees Celsius.

3.1.1.6 M470L5 ThorLabs

This is a blue LED similar to the MWUVL1 in the fact that it is sold with a cooling mount of the same size as the previous LED giving it a small volume. It has a central wavelength of 470nm and a bandwidth of 28nm. Since this bandwidth aligns with our 30nm bandwidth goal we would not need to use a chromatic filter to limit the LEDs bandwidth. There is an 80 degree full angle. It also has a 1161.7mW output power. It has a forward voltage of 3.8 V and an electrical power of 3820mW.

3.1.1.7 Why M470L5 ThorLabs

Table 3.1.1.2 LED Comparison

Features	599 SMD LED Dialight	MWUVL1 ThorLabs	LED560L ThorLabs	M470L5 ThorLabs
Peak Wavelength	587 nm	406 nm	562 nm	470 nm
Bandwidth	15 nm	300 nm	11 nm	28 nm
Output Power	3 mW	235 mW	0.15 mW	1161.7 mW
Electrical Power	42 mW	790 mW	46 mW	3820 mW
Forward Voltage	2.1 V	6.3 V	2.3 V	3.8 V
Cost	\$0.53	\$191.10	\$19.48	\$261.20

For our project we would like to use the LED for two reasons. First being we need to show that our system can handle a broadband source. This means for our first consideration we need a source that has a broad wavelength range. We would like to show that our system can handle a maximum of 30nm. The Dialight and 560L from Thorlabs come far under this requirement. This makes these two LEDs hard to use for this proof of concept. The MWUVL1 has a very large wavelength range, much larger than we are aiming for with our project. This means if we would like to use this diode we would need to place a bandpass filter in front of it. Since we are trying to minimize our costs to stay in budget, we would like to not add any other expenses like a chromatic bandpass filter. The 470L just under the 30nm bandwidth but effectively has the exact bandwidth we need without using any kind of filtering.

The next reason for using an LED is because we would like to test our system for higher power devices on the scale of 20mW. For our project we are going to be passing the beams of light through many different components each with their own absorption and reflection coefficients. This means we need a source of high enough power to be able to pass through all these systems and still have enough power to meet these requirements. The 560L and Dialight LEDs already have too little power to meet our requirements without passing through any optical devices. The MWUVL1 LED has enough power by itself, but after passing the light through a bandpass filter a large portion of the light would not pass through. The bandwidth of the LED is so large, and the power is distributed across the bandwidth. This means by cutting this bandwidth by 270 nm will drastically reduce this

power. By using the M470L we can maximize the power going through our system because we do not need this bandpass filter and we can use the entire bandwidth of the LED.

While the M470L has the highest cost of all the LEDs it will save us money and achieve more of our goals. It will save us money because we will not have to buy a bandpass filter which can be expensive. Using this LED will also guarantee that we will have the power needed to achieve our goals.

3.1.1.8 TLB-6704 Tunable Diode Laser Newport

This impressive laser is tunable with respect to its wavelength. This specific type is tunable around the 650nm range but other products from Newport of the same line tune through different wavelengths. For example, another diode is tunable around the 790nm range. It offers an impressive switching speed of around 5-10ns. They offer output power ranging from 8mW for the product mentioned to 50mW of the TLB-6716. These lasers come with a driver that controls the output wavelength and therefore may take up a lot of space within our system. This source however couples into a fiber which makes for very easy use.

3.1.1.9 ThorLabs PL20X

These compact lasers are extremely easy to use. They have a housing that is 11mm in diameter, making it easy to fit into our 30cm x 30cm optical breadboard. These lasers are connected through USB. They have an operating voltage of around 5V and an operating current of around 70mA. The beam diameter is 3mm. These sources are only single wavelength sources and are not tunable meaning we would need to buy more than one to demonstrate that we are able to use our system on the entire visible spectrum. These lasers are also inexpensive because they do not need to be run by a driver so no purchase of a laser driver would be needed.

3.1.1.10 0220-923-00 Coherent Visible Laser

These lasers from coherent are impressive because of their size and are sold by Edmund Optics. The largest of these lasers are 45.1mm in length and 14.8mm in diameter. This impressive size allows these lasers to be fit into any system and are easily small enough for our design. Unfortunately, they also need a power supply. These lasers are quite expensive for their size, being priced from \$200 to \$700 and the power supply being \$70.

3.1.1.11 Why Thorlabs PL20X

Table 3.1.1.3 Laser Comparison

Features	TLB-6704 Tunable Laser Newport	Thorlabs PL20X	0220-923-00 Edmund Optics
Wavelength	635 nm – 638 nm	635 nm, 520 nm, 405 nm	635 nm
Bandwidth	1 nm	1 nm	5 nm
Diameter	Fiber Diameter	11 mm	14.8 mm
Forward Voltage	100 V	5 V	5 V

Electrical Power	<170 W	0.35 W	0.4 W
Output Power	8 mW	0.9 mW	2 mW
Price	Quote (Related Products \$3,000)	\$146.40 - \$246.67	\$303.03

In our project we are using lasers to show that our system can work for the entire visible spectrum. This means unlike with the LED we do not require a high-power source. This allows us to buy a cheaper, lower power laser if we can test the entire visible spectrum. We chose to do this because high power lasers that can achieve wavelengths across the entire visible spectrum are extremely expensive and out of our budget.

The Newport laser does have a tunable wavelength which would allow us to show how the angle of crystal rotation changes as we change wavelengths. The problem with this laser is that it is extremely expensive. This is expensive because this type of laser is not only hard to build but needs a controller which can accurately change the wavelength of this laser. These controllers are normally large and would not fit inside of our optical breadboard. We would need to only pass the laser into our system using fiber and keep the other parts of the laser outside of the optical breadboard. This makes this laser hard to transport and prone to accidents. We would like to keep our project as contained in the optical breadboard as possible to increase ease of use.

We chose the Thorlabs laser over the Edmund Optics laser because it is not only cheaper but more form fitting. The Thorlabs laser is not much smaller or cheaper than the Edmund laser but because we would like to increase the ease of use of our system we would like to minimize the size of the laser. Also, the Edmund laser needs a power supply attachment that is \$69 which further increases the price of the laser as opposed to the Thorlabs laser. The Thorlabs laser is easy to use because it is connected to a USB, and it is cheaper than its competitors.

3.1.2 Birefringent Crystals

3.1.2.1 Birefringent Crystals as Waveplates

Using Maxwell's equations with appropriate boundary conditions has enabled the discovery of exact solutions for the phase difference and amplitude shift of incident light. This phenomenon happens due to the nature of birefringence. Anisotropic also known as uniaxial or birefringent materials more aptly materials that have differing refractive indices due to the direction and polarization of the light. This difference in the indices often used as a measure of birefringence causes various polarizations of incoming light to experience myriad phase changes. These changes in phase can shape the polarization of the light. Waveplates come in 3 main types, a quarter-wave plate which shifts the phase by 90°, a 180° phase shift is achieved through implementation of a half – wave plate, and the full wave – plate subsequently is a 360° change. Phase Retardation is given by

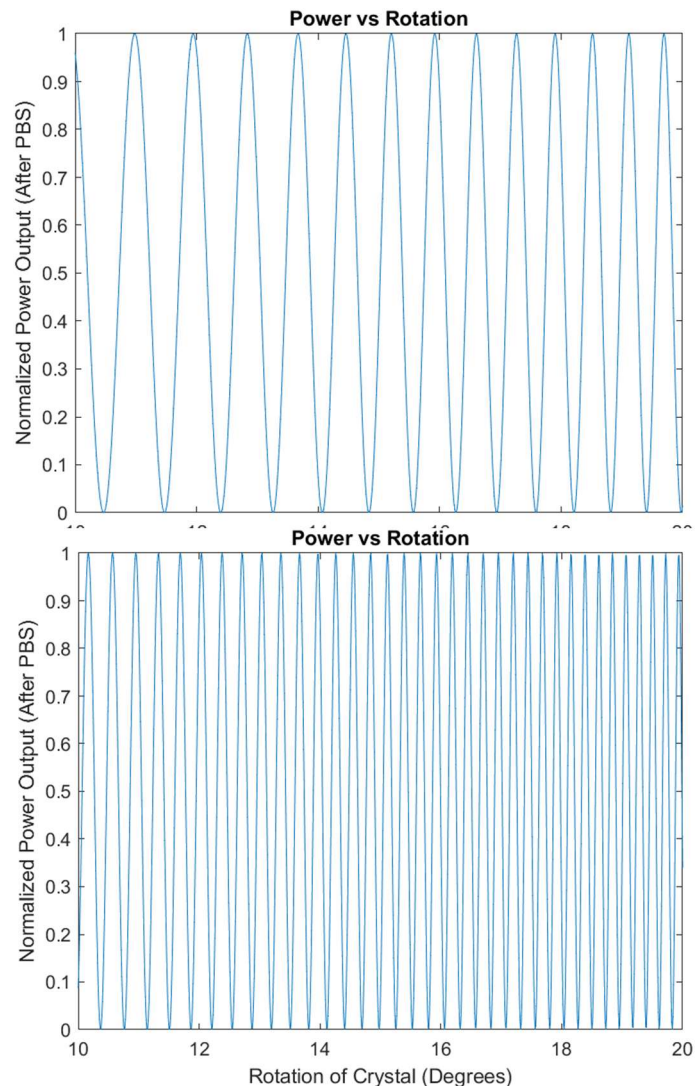
$$\delta = \frac{2\pi \cdot \Delta n \cdot d}{\lambda}$$

where Δn = *Birefringence*, d = *Thickness*, and λ = *Wavelength of light*

Birefringent crystals can be used in waveplates, electro-optical devices and as converters for high-order laser beams.(Paranin 2016) However they excel at polarization modulation, and polarization based methods are often used to characterize the thickness of the crystal. Generally, when linearly polarized light enters the crystal, it is divided by the ordinary and extraordinary refractive indices. Each of the waves interacting with indices travels at its own speed. This difference in speeds creates a change in phase between the two light waves. As seen above the phase difference is not only determined by the Δn it is also influence by the wavelength of the light the thickness of the crystal as well as the angle of incidence. As the light recombines on leaving the crystal the waves undergo coherent interference with one another and reform as a new polarization state. Through this you can achieve elliptical and circular polarization states and of course dictating the angle of linearly polarized light. Furthermore, with the addition of a linear polarizer we will be able to control the output intensity as well. This interference is in the polarization space meaning their vectors create a new polarization state. You can visualize the polarization space through graphical models such as the Poincaré sphere, and Jones Vectors.

3.1.2.2 Quartz Crystal

Quartz Crystal (SiO_2) is a fundamental material that is widely used in electronics and optics. Implementation of Quartz crystal was explored using a MATLAB simulation. In the simulation we tested various thicknesses of the crystal. Keeping in mind the integration necessary onto a mechanical motor, and the timing goal of sub-millisecond switching time. The input light was set at 508 nm responding to a value near center of the visible spectrum and linearly polarized in the vertical direction, in reference to the optical axis. This corresponds to an ordinary refractive index of 1.54822 and an extraordinary index of 1.55746. Starting the simulation with a crystal thickness of 1 cm we get a plot of our output power. This gives us a minimum angle of 0.28° with a target of 0.1° rotation needed for the polarization this means Quartz would need to be a bit thicker to try and get the optimal timing of below 1 millisecond. Any increase in weight would mean greater torque and an increase in vibrations at the point where the motor stops. This implied Quartz may not be one of the better choices if we were looking to not only reduce the minimum angle but also the weight. Using the

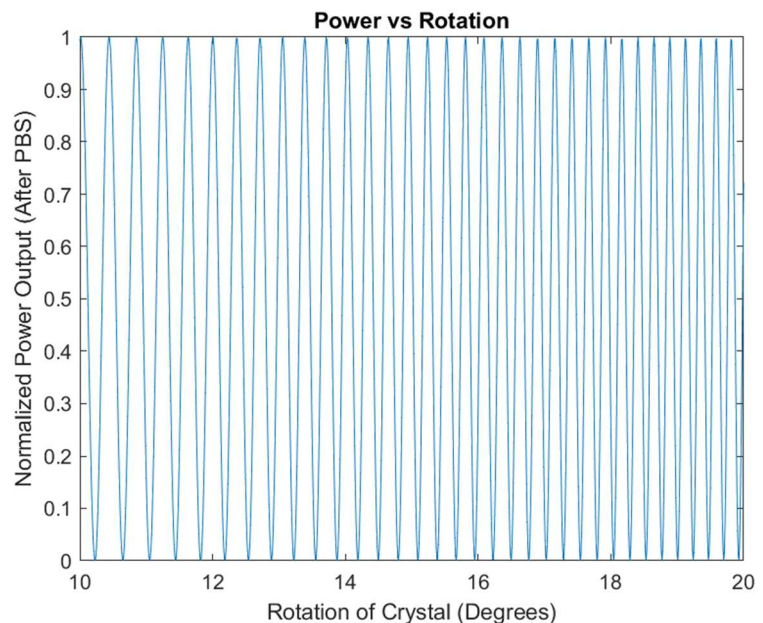
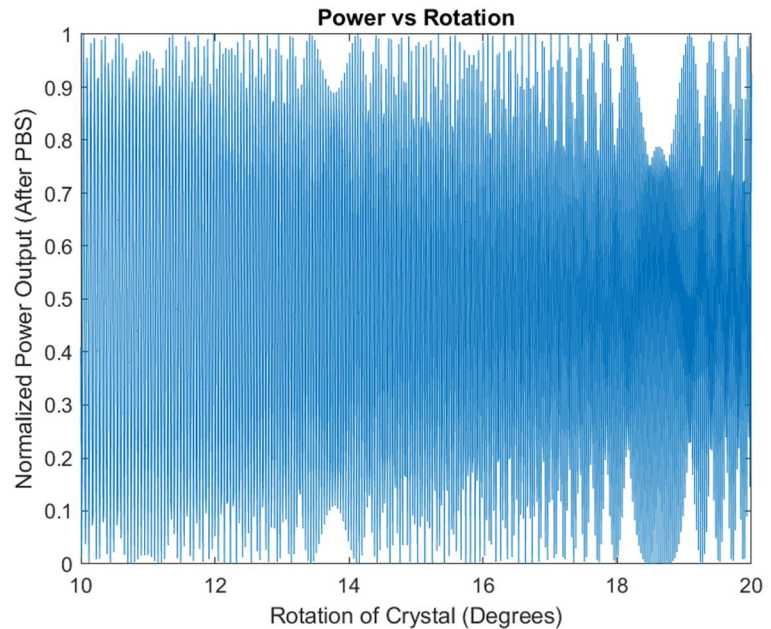


average density of SiO_2 a value of 2650 kg/m^3 we can calculate a mass of 2.65 grams for the cubic centimeter. If we were to achieve a target of 0.1° minimum rotation, the thickness of Quartz would need to be 2.65 cm. Leaving the other dimensions the same brings us to a mass of 7.0225 g. We also get a plot of our output power. Quartz is a foundational material in optics and to explore this crystal as one of the options to be used in this application was almost pre-determined. However, using our simulation created using Jones matrix calculus in MATLAB, shows which of the crystals will be the better fit.

3.1.2.3 Calcite Crystal

Calcite crystal CaCO_3 is a carbonate and is a particularly common material. Found in limestone its trigonal atomic structure make it uniaxial despite the many forms it can take. We can also see calcite formed with some opacity giving it a white color. We will be using the transparent calcite. This selection will decrease optical losses while passing through the calcite and will help maintain the contrast of intensity on the output. This variety is called “Iceland Spar.” Calcite crystal was first discovered to have birefringent properties by Danish scientist Rasmus Bartholin in 1669.

The ordinary refractive index at a wavelength of 508 nm is 1.66527. Conversely the extraordinary refractive index is 1.48596. Using these values, we simulate the normalized output power of the crystal corresponding to a thickness of 1 cm. The plot shows erratic and inconsistent power fluctuations with a minimum change required to switch between orthogonal polarizations states to be 0.01° . These values would need a mechanical motor that is outside of the budget range set by ASML. Deciding to go with a thinner crystal to both give us a little bit more room in rotation and to reduce the force put on the motor from stopping and accelerating, minimizing vibrations in the crystal due to those forces. To achieve a target of 0.1° minimum rotation angle, a thickness of 0.125 cm we get a plot of normalized power. Leaving the other dimensions the same, we see a reduction in overall mass too. Calcite has a density of 2710 kg/m^3 this means the mass of our crystal would be 0.339 grams, a

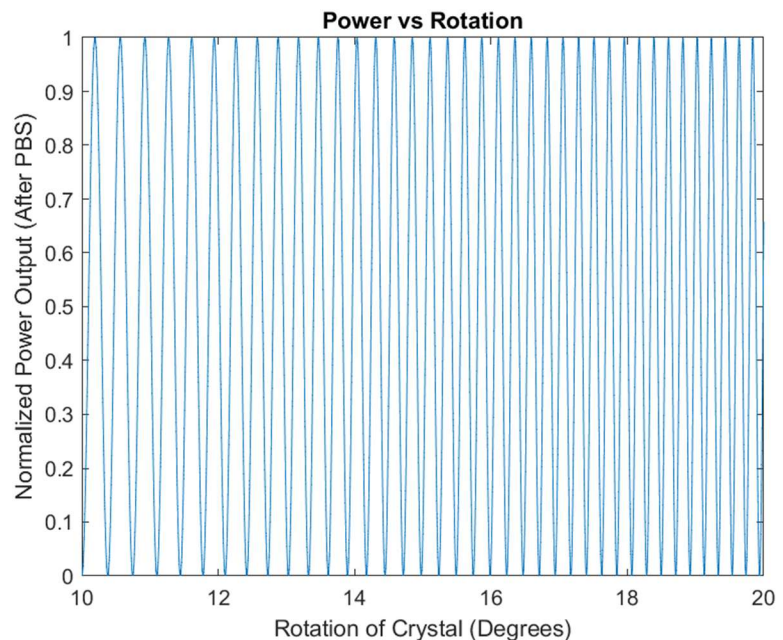
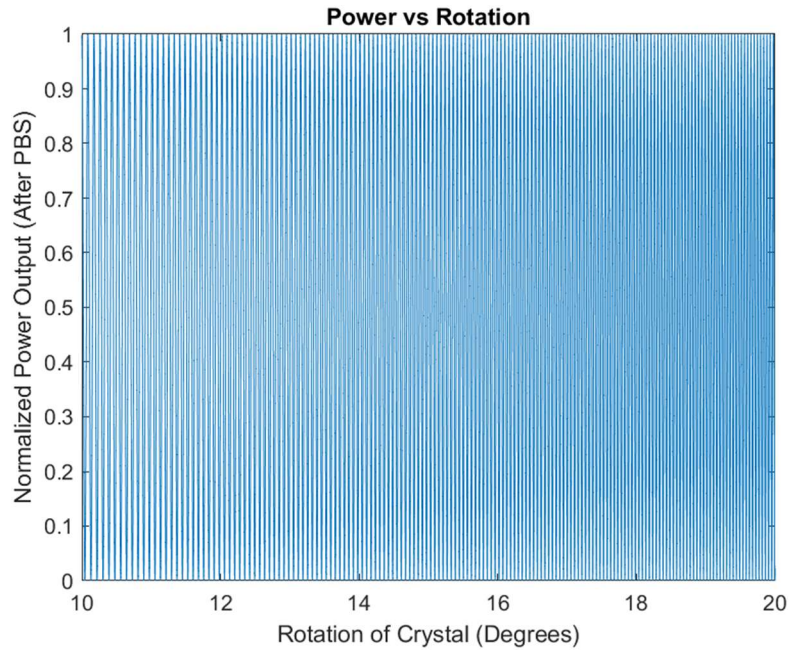


significant reduction therefore the forces exerted on our motor will be less compared to Quartz. Calcite crystal made a very promising option given more time and a larger budget researching and purchasing the right rotation system or even getting one custom designed. It would open up the possibility for even faster devices. To a certain point the speed of the mechanics switching repeatedly may cause issues if it resonates with the device, this will cause the smallest vibrations to cascade into catastrophic failure.

3.1.2.4 α - BBO

Alpha Barium Borate or BaB_2O_4 is an inorganic compound that is a common optical material. It also has a Beta and Gamma structure, both of which have better use during nonlinear optics as they facilitate spontaneous parametric down conversion. α - BBO is used in many polarization-based devices such as Glan – Taylor prisms, beam splitters and has replaced other uniaxial crystals including lithium niobate, calcite and titanium dioxide. To check the crystal, we found known values of the ordinary and extraordinary refractive

indices at a wavelength of 532 nm. With values of 1.6776 and 1.5534 respectively. Using these values in the MATLAB program we created. Starting out a thickness of 1 cm, we obtain a Power vs. Rotation plot. Showing consistent results supports the idea that with greater birefringence you have a greater change in polarization with rotation of the crystal. With a 1 cm thick crystal the minimum rotation needed to achieve orthogonal polarization states is 0.023° . This ends up being a little bigger than the minimum angle needed for calcite. This corresponds to a crystal that needs to be a little thicker to achieve our target of 0.1° for the minimum rotation needed. A thickness of 0.23 cm is what is



required to hit the target minimum rotation. Once again assuming the other dimensions of the crystal stay the same and using the density of Alpha barium borate. 3.85 g/cm^3 this give us an overall mass of crystal to be 0.8855 grams. Alpha Barium Borate is a fantastic crystal used in optical components and will be used as our second crystal that will be “unknown” to the system. However, for an optimal prototype design in this specific application case it falls short of calcite due to its slightly lower birefringence. The following Power vs Rotation plot corresponds to the thickness of 0.230 cm. These results match the previous targets in the other crystals within a margin error.

3.1.2.5 Non – Linear Crystals as Wave plates

Non – linear Crystals are optical elements that enable non – linear processes such as second – harmonic generation, sum/difference frequency generation and optical parametric oscillations. These effects change more than just the polarization of light. High birefringence is not a byproduct of engineering these crystals but a design target. Birefringence is essential to non-linear crystal as this property allows engineers to make use of a technique known as phase matching. Phase matching ensures that the light waves interact with each other, by maintaining a constant phase relationship energy transfer can be maximized.

Second harmonic generation (SHG) is a process where two photons of matching frequency are absorbed by a material, then subsequently a photon of twice the energy is emitted. A common example of this is the use of KTP to produce 532 nm light. This crystal takes in 1064 nm electro – magnetic radiation and through the absorption of two photons can emit radiation at half the wavelength of the incoming light. Note that this comes with a loss of power as some energy is still lost to phonons. Phonons are quanta of energy that are used to represent the vibrational energy absorption and distribution throughout a molecular structure. Second, harmonic generation will not be a helpful process in our application. Looking to finely control polarization states without any conversion of frequency in our light would be ideal. Trying to compensate for this process would require much higher power. In general, these crystals can be more expensive and have higher absorption coefficients as well. Absorption coefficients are determined based on the material you are looking at and can be used to determine the optical power losses with a given path length of the material.

Sum frequency generation while like SHG in that it takes in two photons and emits one. It interestingly does not require the photons to have the same frequency. These photons of varying frequency will join and produce a photon with a frequency corresponding to the sum of the input frequencies of the light. Difference frequency generation is the inverse process. Where the crystal takes in a singular photon and depending upon the properties, will emit two photons with reduced power and of different frequencies. Some of the applications of these processes include microscopy, spectroscopy, tunable light sources, and terahertz generation. These non – linear processes have many great uses and are a great example of the astounding things nature is capable of under the right circumstances.

3.1.2.6 Other Explored Crystals

A couple of the other crystal compounds that we investigated before settling upon calcite were TiO_2 as well as β – BBO Beta Barium Borate. Both of these exhibit some non-linear effects. TiO_2 is a compound that exhibits limited third – order effects such as self – phase modulation or the Kerr effect. In its bulk form TiO_2 exhibits minimal birefringence. However, a higher birefringence can be manufactured by engineering a grating or other microstructures using the material. Due to timeline and financial constraints, we opted for another route.

For the β – BBO we we're already looking into α – BBO as a possible option, so to continue onto the other members of the family to see their strengths and weaknesses was only natural. β – BBO is a very commonly used non – linear crystal with a broad transparency range 200 nm – 3500 nm and an exceptional damage threshold which corresponds to 10 GW/cm². This crystal can be used in applications that require processes from SHG to even Fifth Harmonic Generation. This crystal is also utilized in optical parametric oscillators and electro-optical modulators. While although all of these applications are impressive. The high demand for this crystal and the limited power throughput, to reduce the nonlinear effects, proved this crystal to be an inconvenient solution to our problem.

3.1.2.7 Sellmeier Equations

Sellmeier equations are used to describe the wavelength dependent refractive indices of optical mediums. Each optical medium has it's own formula that is dependent upon the material properties, many crystal production companies will include the refractive index at a few wavelengths as well as the Sellmeier formula for that material. During our research into finding calcite and α – BBO crystals to be used in our setup we documented the formulas for these materials to be implemented into our simulation, these formulas will allow us to see exactly how the refractive index of these materials will change over as broad of a wavelength range as we want. For both materials the Sellmeier equation we used, was provided by Newlight Optical. Due to the birefringent nature of these materials, there is an equation for both the ordinary and extraordinary indices. **Calcite:** $n_o^2 = 2.69705 + \frac{0.0192064}{(\lambda^2 - 0.01820)} - 0.0151624\lambda^2$, and $n_e^2 = 2.18438 + \frac{0.0087309}{(\lambda^2 - 0.01018)} - 0.0024411\lambda^2$ for **α – BBO:** $n_o^2 = 2.67579 + \frac{0.02099}{(\lambda^2 - 0.0470)} - 0.00528\lambda^2$, and $n_e^2 = 2.31197 + \frac{0.01184}{(\lambda^2 - 0.01607)} - 0.00400\lambda^2$ These equations using our input wavelength range are used to create arrays for each of the indices, then using these refractive index arrays we solve for the output electric field in the same way you would for the individual wavelength. The outputs for a broadband source can be found in the following figures. Based on the equations and the limited range of wavelengths only as broad as 30 nm the refractive index change is negligible within the visible regime.

3.1.3 Motors

3.1.3.1 Stepper Motor

The benefits of a stepper motor are its precise positioning as stepper motors can move in exact steps based on the motor step angle (HowEngineeringWorks.com). Stepper motors can have a small step angle as small as 0.9 degrees and can go even smaller through the method of micro-stepping (dividing up the motor step angle to smaller angle increments). Another benefit of the stepper motor is its simple control due to being open-loop feedback. Steeper motor rotates based on the electric pulses sent by the motor driver with the number of pulses telling the stepper motor how many angle steps to take to reach the desired angle (HowEngineeringWorks.com). An additional advantage of the stepper motor is its holding torque. Stepper motors can remain in position without drifting as the mechanism of the stepper motor is able to produce holding torque to stop the motor in place (HowEngineeringWorks.com). Lastly, stepper motors are reliable and durable due to the motors only having a few moving parts which leads to less maintenance, less wearing, and a long operational life (HowEngineeringWorks.com).

The disadvantages of a stepper motor are its limited speed. Stepper motors typically have a maximum speed of 3,000 rpm and when the motors start running at high speeds, the overall torque decreases which can lead to the stepper motors missing steps, decreasing the overall accuracy of the system (HowEngineeringWorks.com). Another disadvantage of the stepper motor is its power efficiency as stepper motor requires a full current draw for each step it takes which leads to higher energy consumption and heat generation (HowEngineeringWorks.com). This also leads to an overheating problem as long period of uses with the stepper motor can cause excess heat production which can damage the motor if there are not proper cooling procedures in place (HowEngineeringWorks.com). An additional disadvantage of the stepper motor is its vibration and noise as it rotates, which can impact the crystal as the vibration may resonate with the crystal, impacting our readings.

If a stepper motor is chosen to be used in our system, micro-stepping will need to be done to ensure the motor can have a maximum step angle of 0.1 degrees. Micro-stepping can also help with the vibration and noise issue to prevent the crystal from resonating and interfering with the data. Another benefit is the holding torque of the stepper motor which would help with stopping the motor and holding the crystal in place to be able to read the desired measurements we want from our system. However, a drawback of the stepper motor is its open-loop feedback system which would become a problem if the stepper motor skipped steps. This becomes an increasing issue as the stepper motor will need to go at high speed, and the accuracy of the system may not be met. Another problem is the overall torque of the system. As the stepper motor increase speed, the overall torque decreases which may become a problem as the stepper motor may not be able to produce the necessary torque needed to rotate with the crystal load within the necessary switching time.

3.1.3.2 Servo Motor

The benefits of a servo motor are its precision control due to having a closed-loop feedback system that allows precise control over the motor's position, speed, and torque (Retekdrones). This will permit accurate position with the motor rotation along with consistent speed and torque throughout the motor usage. Another benefit of the servo motor is its speed range as a servo motor can reach speeds upwards to 6,000 rpm. Not only can a servo motor reach such high speeds, the torque of the servo motor also remains consistent no matter what speed the servo motor goes. This permits more load flexibility with the overall motor system as the mass of the load can be changed and the servo motor would be able to handle this different load mass due to its consistent torque (Retekdrones). Servo motors are also energy efficient as they only consumed the needed power for the servo motor to rotate at its necessary speed for the desired rotational movement (Retekdrones).

The disadvantage of a servo motor is its complexity. Since a servo motor is a closed-loop feedback system, tuning is needed to ensure that the feedback system of the servo motor is working properly. This means that the person tuning the servo motor needs to have a deep understanding of control theory to tune the various parameters needed for the feedback device to work properly (Zhou). Another disadvantage of a servo motor is its cost. Due to being a closed-loop feedback system, the servo motor will have a higher complex control system that requires extra equipment such as an encoder and possibly a special controller for the system to work properly as intended (Retekdrones). Another drawback of the servo motor is the maintenance upkeep. The servo motor has a lot more moving parts that needs to be inspected and maintained to ensure proper functionality of the servo motor (Retekdrones).

If a servo motor is chosen to be used in our system, the closed-loop feedback system will be beneficial to ensure that the servo motor is rotating 0.1 degrees as per the requirements. The load flexibility of the servo motor will also be helpful with being able to switch the crystals out as the change in the load would not significantly impact the performance of the servo motor. However, due to the complexity of the control system of the servo motor, it could possibly mean an increase in the workload for the team to configure the feedback system of the servo motor to ensure the 0.1 degrees movement in 1 millisecond switching time is met. Another concern with choosing to use a servo motor would be the cost of the servo motor due to needing an encoder, which could be a possible concern for the budget of the project.

3.1.3.3 Brushless DC Motor

The benefit of a brushless DC motor is its efficiency. Since the brushless DC motor does not have a brush in its motor, this decreases the overall friction in the system between the moving parts of a motor (Modar Motor). This overall decrease in friction leads to a more efficient motor system. Another benefit of the brushless DC motor is its low maintenance cost and the longevity of the system. The lack of a brush in the motor means less parts are rubbing against each other which leads to less wear in the motor system (Modar Motor). An advantage of the brushless DC motor is its speed control. A brushless DC motor has a speed control that can go up to 60,000 rpm without

overheating which makes it effective in situations where precise accuracy is needed (Mechtex). Another advantage of the brushless DC motor is its low noise due to the lack of a brush in the motor, the motor rotates quietly with minimal vibrations (Modar Motor).

The disadvantage of a brushless DC motor is its cost. Due to the speed control of the motor, the motor requires hall sensors and encoders to assist with the speed control of the motor to ensure proper operation (Mechtex). Another disadvantage of the brushless DC motor is its complexity. Since the motor utilize a closed-loop feedback system, proper calibration needs to be conducted to ensure the motor system is working properly (Modar Motor). A drawback of using a brushless DC motor is its heat dissipation. The motor dissipation of heat increases as the speed of the motor increases which can lead to performance issues with the overall power efficiency of the motor system and potential damage to the components of the motor (Mechtex).

If a brushless DC motor is chosen to be used in our system, the low vibrations of the motor system would help ensure that the motor does not resonate with the crystal which can impact the output measurement of this system. The speed control of the brushless DC motor would also help with ensuring that the motor rotated 0.1 degrees with a switching time of 1 millisecond. However, the drawback to this is that the brushless DC motor does not have a position feedback system and thus, the accuracy of the position moved cannot be verified by the motor system. Another disadvantage with using a brushless DC motor is its complexity with having to configure the speed control of the motor which can lead to an increased workload for the team.

3.1.3.4 Galvanometer Motor

The benefits of a galvanometer motor are its precise position control. The galvanometer motor utilizes a closed-loop feedback system in which the sensors in the galvanometer motor sends the positioning information back to the controller for the controller to send information to correct the positioning errors to ensure accurate positioning of the motor (Artizono). Another benefit of the galvanometer motor is its small step angle as the galvanometer motor can have a step angle as small as a single microradian (Sintec Optronics). Another advantage of the galvanometer motor is its step response time. The galvanometer motor has a small step response time in the sub-millisecond due to having a large bandwidth in its closed-loop feedback system that can be as high as several kilohertz, minimizing the settling time of the motor and ensuring proper time for the position control to function (Artizono , Sintec Optronics). An advantage of the galvanometer motor is its scanning field as the galvanometer motor has a scanning range up to 20 degrees (Artizono).

The disadvantage of a galvanometer motor is its complexity. Due to the galvanometer motor being a closed-loop feedback system, the galvanometer motor utilizes a Proportional-Integral-Derivative control system to minimize the positional error which means the person tuning the system needs to have a deep understanding of control theory (Sintec Optronics). Another drawback of the galvanometer motor is its cost. Since the galvanometer motor is a closed-loop feedback system, additional equipment needs to be brought, such as sensors or an integral position detector, for the controller to be able to receive information about the motor position to correct these positional

errors (Sintec Optronics) A disadvantage of the galvanometer motor is its maintenance as the galvanometer motor may need periodic calibration to ensure the motor system is working properly as intended and parts may need to be replaced as constant use may lead to wear on the motor parts (Artizono).

If a galvanometer motor is chosen to be used in our system, the precise position control would be helpful to ensure that the motor is rotating 0.1 degrees with minimal positional error. The small resolution angle for the step size of the galvanometer motor would also be helpful with rotating the crystal in the small step angle to hit the desired polarization that the user may want. The large bandwidth of the closed-loop feedback system of the galvanometer motor would be helpful with ensuring that the 1 millisecond switching time is achieved for the motor system. However, an issue with using the galvanometer motor is its complexity as configuration of the closed-loop feedback system would be necessary to ensure the galvanometer motor is working properly as intended but this can lead to an increased workload for the team. Another issue would be the cost of the galvanometer motor due to the extra equipment the motor system would need to meet the requirements of the project which could lead to a strain in the budget of the project.

Table 3.1.3.1 Motor Type Comparison

Feature	Stepper Motor	Servo Motor	Brushless DC Motor	Galvanometer Motor
Step Angle (Degrees)	0.9 / 0.1125 (with micro stepping)	0.088 (with 12 bits encoder)	N/A	0.000057
Feedback System	Open-Loop	Closed-Loop	Closed-Loop	Closed-Loop
Control System	N/A	Position, Speed, Torque	Speed, Torque	Position
Energy Efficiency	High Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption	Medium Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption
Heat Generation	High	Low	High	Low
Cost	Small: \$5 - \$50 Medium: \$20 - \$150 Large: \$50 - \$1,500+	Small: \$5 - \$50 Medium: \$100 - \$2,000 High Torque: \$1,000 - \$8,000	Small: \$15 - \$50 Mid-Range: \$150 - \$1,000 High Torque: \$1,000 - \$7,000	Small: \$50 - \$600 High Speed: \$300 - \$4,500 Industrial: \$3,500 - \$10,000+
Suitability for Motor System	Micro stepping needed for degree movement, Torque concerns with micro stepping	Position control for 0.1 degree movement, Speed control to reach 1 ms switching time,	Speed control to reach 1 ms switching time, Torque control to rotate motor, Additional sensor/encoder	Position control for 0.1 degree movement

		Torque control to rotate motor	needed for position control	
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3.1.3.5 Why Galvanometer Motor?

The galvanometer motor was chosen as the motor for our motor system. The galvanometer motor was chosen for its small step angle which will be helpful in rotating the crystal to get the desired polarization for our system. The closed-loop feedback system of the galvanometer motor will ensure that the motor is rotating to the desired position. The galvanometer motor is also known for its fast-switching time which will ensure that the motor system can reach the required switching time of 1 millisecond.

3.1.3.6 ThorLabs SS30Y-AG 1D Galvanometer

The SS30Y-AG was one of two galvanometers that made the final cut, the other galvo being the the Noavanta 6210K, both have similar specifications with the key factor being repeatability. Repeatability of a galvanometer is the maximum deviation from the target position over repeated movements. Another key feature of this motor is the cross-flexure technology it employs, rather than other ball bearing galvos. This technology improves the stability during scanning motion in small angle applications while experiencing less wear and position error. Achieving longer lifetimes and higher repeatability. With the ThorLabs motor achieving repeatability below 10 μ rad which keeps us below the margin of error needed for the chosen position, as well as claims of lifetimes in the billions of operating hours, under proper conditions and a small angle response time of about 1.2 ms for a 0.45° angle. Which gets us extremely close to our target, with a chosen target of around 0.1° we were likely to meet our timing goals. The Novanta motor actually had slightly improved specs. When it came to repeatability their motor boasted an even better repeatability of 8 μ rad, with a comparable life time and an easier out of the box assembly, as well as a operating software to easily program and control the motor. The 6210K from Noavanta was our first choice. However, after contacting them regarding our needs and how they could best be met. Noavanta gave us a 24-week lead time. This conflicted with our timeline and was what ultimately lead us to choose a more readily available solution. Both motors come with a servo-driver. However, to operate the ThorLabs SS30Y-AG we would need more components that were sold separately or from other suppliers all together namely a DAQ card. Controlling the Galvo requires a pulsed input sine wave. Under continuous back and forth scanning of the full angle a basic input sine wave works. However, for our application, such as small movements back and forth a more complicated input signal is required to achieve this signal we needed to implement a data acquisition card or DAQ card, this card is between the servo and the power supply and integrates with a computer allowing you to modulate the input signal to the motor. The servo amplifier that comes with the motor has a command input range of ± 5 V and a position input scale factor of $0.22 \text{ V}/^\circ$.

Table 3.1.3.2 Galvanometer Motor Comparison

Features	SCANLAB's dyn <i>AXIS</i>	Noavanta 62xxK Galvonometer	Cross-Flexure 1D Galvanometer
Cost	Quote	Quote	\$3,819.90
Lead Time	4 Months	6 Months	Available Now
Small Step Angle Response	Data Sheet Unavailable	100 μ s – 200 μ s	150 μ s
Repeatability	Data Sheet Unavailable	8 μ rad	< 10 μ rad

3.1.4 Motor Driver

Motor drivers are an important part of the motor system since the motor driver plays an essential role in taking the motor controller's low power command signals and converting them into high power voltage and current to be delivered to the motor for the motor to rotate to the desired position (McKay). The motor driver also plays a role in the control system of the closed-loop feedback system of the motor. The motor driver receives the encoder signal on the positioning error and either sends this signal back to its own control loop to correct the error or sends the signal to the motor controller for the controller to determine the best course of action to fix the error (McKay). It is essential to choose a motor driver that is compatible with the chosen galvanometer motor as choosing the wrong motor driver can impact the performance, efficiency, and reliability of the motor system which can prevent us from meeting the requirements of this project (FlexPCB).

The Class 1 Servo Amplifier for QS Series Galvo Scanners was chosen as the motor driver for our project since the chosen galvanometer motor for our project automatically comes with its own motor driver. The motor driver that comes with the chosen galvanometer motor is a Position, Integral, and Differential (PID) servo amplifier that has been factory tuned to be compatible with the chosen galvanometer motor. Utilizing the motor driver that comes with the chosen galvanometer motor instead of choosing our own motor driver to use will ensure that there is no compatibility issue between the motor and the motor driver along with decreasing the workload of the project as the PID settings of the motor driver has already been configured to work best with the galvanometer motor. Therefore, for the best performance of the motor, the motor driver that comes with the chosen galvanometer motor will be utilized in our project.

3.1.5 High Level Motor Controller

3.1.5.1 Computer

The computer can be used as the high level motor controller through hosting software that converts the user's command to digital marking data that holds the information needed for motor rotational movement (Google Gemini 2025). This digital marking data then gets sent to the interface card or

galvo controller card to convert the digital position commands into analog voltage signals (Google Gemini 2025). The galvo controller card then sends this information to the motor driver of the system in which the driver amplifies the signals to drive the motor based on the received information (Artizono , Google Gemini 2025). The motor's sensors sense the position of the motor and sends this information back to the computer for the computer to decide on the best way to correct this error and sends this correction back to the interface card in which it goes through the whole process again (Artizono).

3.1.5.2 Microcontroller

The microcontroller can be used as the motor controller through generating the digital position commands for the motor rotational movement. These digital position commands are then sent to an external Digital to Analog Converter (DAC) for the digital position commands to be converted into analog signals (DeltaFlo , Google Gemini 2025). The motor driver expects a command input range from -5 Volts to +5 Volts but due to the microcontroller only being able to output a unipolar digital signal, the converted analog signals need to be sent through an inverting operational amplifier (op-amp) to also get the negative range of the analog signals (DeltaFlo , Google Gemini 2025). Then both the positive and negative range of the analog signals gets sent to the motor driver in which the motor driver will then amplify the signals to drive the motor based on the received information (DeltaFlo , Google Gemini 2025). The motor's sensors sense the position of the motor and sends this information back to the microcontroller in which the microcontroller decides on the best way to correct the positional errors and sends this correction to the DAC, starting the whole process again (Google Gemini 2025)

Table 3.1.5.1 High Level Motor Controller Comparison

Specification	Computer	Microcontroller
External Technology	Galvo Controller Card	Digital to Analog Converter
Software	Company Recommended Software	Arduino Libraries
Energy Efficiency	Low Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption
Cost	Computer: N/A (Personal Laptop) Galvo Controller Card: \$300 - \$750	Microcontroller: \$4 - \$35 DAC: \$5 - \$25

3.1.5.3 Why Computer?

Computer was chosen as the motor controller for our motor system due to its software capabilities. Utilizing the company recommended software from the galvo controller card chosen would help the workload of the team as the software would permit us to enter the position of the motor desired based on the user's chosen polarization. On the other hand, a drawback of choosing the microcontroller would mean more DIY integration and coding which could lead to a greater workload for the team (Google Gemini 2025). A drawback to utilizing the computer as the motor controller is the overall cost to the budget. Using the microcontroller instead would help minimize the increase in cost and ensure we stay in budget. However, the workload benefits from choosing the computer were worth the cost that it would add to the budget in comparison to the low cost of the microcontroller but could potentially increase workload for the team.

3.1.5.4 Data Acquisition Card (DAQ)

The DAQ card was chosen as the interface card for the motor system. The reason the DAQ card was chosen was due to the chosen galvanometer motor's company (Thorlabs) recommending the usage of the DAQ card with the galvanometer motor for more complex scanning patterns (Thorlabs). The purpose of a DAQ card is to receive analog signal from external equipment such as sensors for the computer to process and utilize the information (Masood). The DAQ card is also capable of outputting analog signals based on the data the computer wants to transfer to other external equipment (CDN Newswire and LabJack Corporation). The DAQ card can receive data from external equipment for the computer to analyze and utilize is due to the DAQ card having an Analog to Digital Converter (ADC) within its system (Masood). In turn, the DAQ card is able to transmit the data the computer wants to send to the other external equipment in the system is due to the DAQ card having a DAC within its own system (CDN Newswire and LabJack Corporation).

Table 3.1.5.2 DAQ Card Comparison

Features	USB-6002	PCIE-1812-B	MCC USB-160G
Analog Output Channel	2 Channels	2 Channels	2 Channels
Maximum Sample Rate	50,000 Samples per Second	250,000 Samples per Second	500,000 Samples per Second
Analog Input Resolution	16 bits	16 bits	16 bits
Maximum Update Rate	5,000 Samples per Second	3,000,000 Samples per Second	500,000 Samples per Second
Analog Output Voltage	± 10 V	± 10 V	± 10 V
Cost	\$697	\$1,333	\$919

3.1.5.5 DAQ Card Chosen

The USB-6002 was chosen as the DAQ card for our project due to its price and sampling capabilities. The USB-6002 is the cheapest model out of the three models compared which will help with the budgeting of this project to make sure we stay under the given budget by our sponsor. The DAQ card also has a sample rate of 50,000 samples per second which translates to 50 samples per millisecond, which meets the requirements we want for this project. However, an issue with this DAQ card model is its update rate. This DAQ card model has an update rate of 5,000 samples per second which translates to 5 samples per millisecond to control the motor movement. This can lead to a tight control bandwidth to move the chosen galvanometer motor 0.1 degrees in 1 millisecond. However, due to the budget we have for the cost of the motor along with the optics devices, the USB-6002 model was chosen for our DAQ card to ensure that we stay within the given budget of the project.

3.1.5.6 DAQ Card Software

NI-DAQmx and LabVIEW are complementary tools developed by National Instruments that together enable powerful data acquisition and control systems. NI-DAQmx is a driver software that facilitates communication between your computer and National Instruments hardware, such

as USB DAQ devices, PCI boards, or PXI modules. It provides a robust API for configuring and executing tasks like analog and digital input/output, counter operations, and timing synchronization. Users typically begin by using Measurement & Automation Explorer (MAX), a utility that comes with NI-DAQmx, to detect connected devices, configure channels, and test hardware functionality. Within LabVIEW, NI-DAQmx integrates seamlessly through the DAQ Assistant a program wizard that helps users set up acquisition tasks and automatically generates the corresponding LabVIEW code. For more advanced users, direct calls to NI-DAQmx VIs (Virtual Instruments) allow for fine-grained control and customization of data acquisition workflows.

LabVIEW itself is a graphical programming environment designed for engineers and scientists to build measurement, automation, and control systems. Instead of writing traditional code, users create programs by wiring together functional blocks in a flowchart-like interface. This visual approach makes it easier to design complex systems, especially when dealing with real-time data acquisition, signal processing, and hardware control. LabVIEW supports modular design through subVIs, enabling reusable and scalable code structures. It also offers deployment options to real-time targets and FPGAs, making it suitable for high-speed and deterministic applications. When used with NI-DAQmx, LabVIEW becomes a complete solution for building interactive, responsive, and reliable experimental setups—from simple voltage measurements to sophisticated multi-channel control systems.

3.1.6 Microcontrollers

The purpose of microcontrollers in this project is to control the LED and the laser diode to turn on or off based on the user's input. If the user inputs to turn on the laser diode, the microcontroller will output a certain voltage value to turn on the load switch. Then, the voltage will go through the circuit to turn on the USB powered laser diode. If the user inputs to turn off the laser diode, the microcontroller will not output any voltage which will turn off the load switch. A similar procedure will occur with the LED. If the user inputs to turn on the LED, the microcontroller will output a certain voltage value to turn on the LED driver. The LED driver will then turn on and then ensure the LED receives the proper current and voltage ratings. If the user inputs to turn off the LED, the microcontroller will not output any voltage which will turn off the LED driver. The user will input this information through a graphical user interface (GUI) that we will create and thus, the microcontroller will need to have Wi-Fi or Bluetooth capability to be able to receive information from this GUI.

3.1.6.1 ESP32

The ESP32 has many features that can be helpful and could be utilized for this project. The ESP32 has Wi-Fi capabilities (2.4 GHz Wi-Fi, 802.11 b/g/n) with being able to connect to a Wi-Fi network and is even capable with creating its own Wi-Fi wireless network for other devices to connect to the ESP32 (Random Nerd Tutorials , Starting Electronics). The ESP32 also has Bluetooth capabilities as it supports the Bluetooth Classic and Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) functionality (Random Nerd Tutorials). The ESP32 also has the GPIO (general-purpose input/output) pins feature as the ESP32 can offer upwards to 32 GPIO pins (Starting Electronics). The ESP32 also supports a variety of development environments such as the Arduino IDE, MicroPython, ESP-IDF, and the PlatformIO (Starting Electronics). The ESP32 is also known for its low cost as the cheapest ESP32 cost as low as \$3 and the most expensive ESP32 only costs as high as \$14 (Zink). The

ESP32 also has low power consumption capability as the ESP32 supports low-power mode states such as deep sleep (Random Nerd Tutorials).

3.1.6.2 MSP430

The MSP430 has many features that can be helpful for the project. The MSP430 is known for its ultra-low power consumption due to its lower sleep current functionality and efficient wake behavior which reduces the overall power consumption of the microcontroller (Unit Electronics). The MSP430 also supports its own developmental environment known as Code Composer Studio (IDE) that supports a variety of libraries and documentation to assist with the programming of the microcontroller (Allen). The MSP430 is also on the low side of microcontroller costs since the MSP430 can cost as low as \$2.07 and can be as expensive as \$21.93, which would help keep the cost of the project low (Allen). The MSP430 also offers the GPIO functionality with the microcontroller offering GPIO pins as low as 4 pins or as high as 90 pins depending on the model type (Ariat Technology). However, a drawback of utilizing the MSP430 in our project is its lack of built-in Wi-Fi or Bluetooth modules in its development boards. The MSP430 does not support Wi-Fi nor Bluetooth capabilities which means an external module must be brought to be used with the MSP430 if wireless communications want to be done for our project (Roberts , Sharma).

3.1.6.3 Arduino Uno

The Arduino Uno has many features that can be helpful for the project. The Arduino Uno has GPIO pins features with 14 digital pins that can act as inputs or outputs with the output pins being able to be set to output a voltage value of 5 Volts or 0 Volts (Linux Code , Mitchell). The Arduino Uno also supports its own developmental environment known as the Arduino IDE which supports a variety of libraries and provides a simple programming language as it utilizes a simplified version of the C/C++ programming language (Linux Code). The Arduino Uno is on the low side cost wise as the cheapest Arduino Uno cost \$20 while the most expensive Arduino Uno cost \$55.40, which means choosing the Arduino Uno would not lead to much strain on our budget. The Arduino uno also has low power consumption ability as the Arduino Uno supports a Low Power Library that can help with decreasing the overall power consumption of the microcontroller through a variety of methods such as sleep mode and stand-by mode (Chung and Bagur). However, an issue with utilizing the Arduino Uno for the project is its Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities. The Arduino Uno has not have Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities built into the board, but instead, external equipment must be added to the board for such features to be included in the Arduino Uno (Mitchell).

3.1.6.4 STM32

The STM32 has a variety of features that can be helpful for the project. The STM32 has GPIO pins feature as it hosts about 37 digital I/O pins on the board that can output a voltage of 3.3 Volts (Gariyal). The STM32 also supports a variety of development environments such as the Arm Keli MDK, PlatformIO IDE, and STM32CubeIDE that comes with various compilers and drivers to help the software development process (STM32-base). The STM32 also supports a variety of programming languages such as C, C++, BASIC, Python, and Ada which will offer more flexibility in the project with being able to choose the programming language we want when programming the microcontroller (Highleap Electronic). The STM32 also supports low power consumption through offering various low power modes such as a sleep mode and standby modes (Chatarjee). The STM32 also supports Bluetooth capabilities with its built-in Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) module; however, the STM32 does not support Wi-Fi capabilities and an external module must be brought instead to be able to utilize wireless communications through the Wi-Fi method

(Chatarjee). However, the STM32 in terms of cost is a bit more expensive in comparison to other microcontrollers due to its higher level of performance and functionality (Highleap Electronic). Another potential drawback of choosing the STM32 is its learning curve as the STM32 is known for offering more advanced features and capabilities which leads to more complex programming to utilize those features and capabilities (Highleap Electronic).

Table 3.1.6.1 Microcontroller Type Comparison

Features	ESP32	MSP 430	Arduino Uno	STM32
Wireless Connectivity	Wi-Fi, Bluetooth	Requires External Equipment	Requires External Equipment	Bluetooth
GPIO Pins	34	4 to 90 (Depends on the Model)	14	37+ (Depends on the Model)
Energy Efficiency	Low Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption
Cost	\$3 - \$14	\$2 - \$25	\$20 - \$55.40	\$1 - \$25
Suitability for Laser/LED Control	Supports Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless connectivity, Supports Arduino IDE for simple I/O programming	Lacks wireless connectivity, Simple programming and more control over the bit values in the registers	Lacks wireless connectivity, Cost a bit more than the other microcontrollers	Supports Bluetooth wireless connectivity, Too complex for simple I/O programming

3.1.6.5 Why ESP32?

The ESP32 was chosen as the microcontroller for our project. The reason being is that the ESP32 supports Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless connectivity unlike the MSP430 and the Arduino Uno which both require external equipment for Wi-Fi or Bluetooth capabilities which can increase the cost of the project. The STM32 supports Bluetooth capabilities and is similar in cost to an ESP32 but STM32 are often known for its advanced features and capabilities which leads to more complex programming. Since the microcontroller will only be used to turn on or off the laser diode and LED based on controlling the voltage through the load switch or LED driver, only simple on/off I/O programming will occur and thus, the STM32 is too advanced of a microcontroller for this project. Thus, the ESP32 was chosen as the microcontroller for this project for its wireless connectivity, cost, and simple programming.

3.1.6.6 ESP32 Development Kit

For our prototype, a development kit will be utilized to test the code and to have USB communication protocol support. Having the USB protocol support would make it easy to compile the code onto the microcontroller to test the code and debug the code as needed.

3.1.6.7 ESP32-S3-DevKitC-1

This ESP32 model has a built in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Low Energy MCU module that has Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Low Energy capabilities. This ESP32 model processing power consist of a dual core 32-bit LX7 CPU with a main frequency that goes up to 240 MHz which will ensure a fast

processing time for simple and complex features that this development board offers (Elektronikz). The ESP32-S3-DevKitC-1 comes in various variants with the N8R8 and 1U-N8R8 variants offering 8 MB for flashing while the N32R16V variant offers 32 MB for flashing. The ESP32 model also supports a USB port which will ensure an easy workflow of allowing an easy way to test the code of controlling the LED and laser diode. The ESP32 model also supports a 5 V to 3.3 V low dropout (LDO) regulator which allows the ESP32 to output a voltage of 3.3 V through its GPIO pins. This ESP32 holds a total of 42 pins with 34 of those pins being GPIO pins that can be used for our project. Most of the GPIO pins on this ESP32 model are broken out to pin headers which make it easy to prototype on the breadboard.

3.1.6.8 ESP32-C3-DevKitM-1

This ESP32 model is a compact size development board and is equipped with an ultra-low-power System on Chip (SOC) which allows this ESP32 model to be battery powered (Elektronikz). The ESP32 model also offers additional power modes (such as active, modem-sleep, light-sleep, and deep sleep) to further lower the power consumption of the development board. This ESP32 model has a 32-bit RISC-V single core processor with a clock speed that goes upwards to 160 MHz. The ESP32 model also offers 4 MB for flashing within its chip package. The ESP32 model also has Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Low Energy capabilities along with having a total of 30 pins on the board, but only 15 of those pins can be used for I/O purposes. Most of these pins are also broken out to pin holders which will be helpful when prototyping on the breadboard. This ESP32 model supports a micro-USB port along with a 5 V to 3.3 V LDO regulator.

3.1.6.9 ESP32-C5-DevKitC-1

This ESP32 model has Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Low Energy capabilities along with Zigbee and Thread functionality. A key component of this ESP32 model that separates it from other ESP32 models is its dual-band Wi-Fi support as it can support both 5 GHz and 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi (K). The ESP32 model is running on the high-performance RISC-V processor with a clock speed that goes up to 240 MHz which ensures fast response time for its more complex capabilities along with completing simple tasks even faster than usual in comparison to other ESP32 development boards. This ESP32 model supports a Type C USB port along with a 5 V to 3.3 V DC/DC voltage regulator and 8 MB for flashing the microcontroller. This ESP32 model has a total of 32 pins with 22 of those pins can be used for I/O purposes. Most of those pins are also broken out to pin holders which will be useful for prototyping on the breadboard.

Table 3.1.6.2 ESP32 Comparison

Features	S3-DevKitC-1	C3-DevKitM-1	C5-DevKitC-1
Wireless Connectivity	Wi-Fi, Bluetooth	Wi-Fi, Bluetooth	Wi-Fi (dual-band), Bluetooth
Processing Power	Dual-Core, 32-Bit LX7 CPU (240 MHz)	Single-Core, 32-bit RISC-V (160 MHz)	Single-Core, RISC-V (240 MHz)
I/O Pins	34	15	22
RAM	8 MB / 32 MB	4 MB	8 MB
Cost	\$15	\$9.80	\$13.90
Power Efficiency (in comparison)	Medium Power Consumption	Low Power Consumption	High Power Consumption

Suitability for Laser/LED Control	Offers both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, fast processing power, high amount of RAM for flashing, Decent power efficiency	Offers both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, Slower clock speed, Low amount of RAM for flashing, Excellent power efficiency	Offers both Wi-Fi (dual-band) and Bluetooth, Fast processing power but only single-core, Low power efficiency (in comparison to other models)
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3.1.6.10 ESP32 Development Kit Chosen

The ESP32-S3-DevKitC-1 was chosen as the microcontroller for our project. The reason we choose this microcontroller over the other models is due to its power efficiency and simplicity. The ESP32-C3-DevKitM-1 was not chosen as the microcontroller for our project despite its low cost was due to its processing power as it was a bit slower in comparison to the other model options. The ESP32-C5-DevKitC-1 supported dual band Wi-Fi; however, there are limitations to the 5 GHz Wi-Fi. Limitations to the 5 GHz Wi-Fi is its compatibility with other devices as it is a relatively new Wi-Fi functionality and as such, older devices and routers may not be able to take advantage of the 5 GHz features (ESPBoards). Another limitation of the 5 GHz Wi-Fi is its range since the 5 GHz Wi-Fi offers faster data exchange speed and will experience less interference from external equipment, it comes at the cost of only being effective in short ranges and the Wi-Fi signals has a hard time of going through walls which can be an issue if the router is not in the same room as the device connected to the Wi-Fi (ESPBoards). Thus, the advanced features of the ESP32-C5-DevKitC-1 were not needed in this project, and the extra power consumption was not worth it for the simple tasks of enabling a switch. Therefore, the ESP32-S3-DevKitC-1 was chosen for our project as it meets the wireless connectivity and processing power requirements needed for this project with a power efficiency that was agreeable for this section of the system.

3.1.7 Power Meter

Power meters are essential to almost every optical project. Mainly these devices work by using a photodiode which is a semiconductor device that works in reverse to an LED. By placing a P-side and N-side semiconductor together and applying a reverse voltage across them they no longer emit light like a semiconductor. Instead, when light comes in contact with the semiconductor it gets absorbed by the material which causes an electron to jump to the valence band of the material. Once this electron is in the valence band it is able to pass through the semiconductor (Murari 2009). We then read the amount of power being generated by the photodiode and can determine the amount of optical power incident on the power meter.

For our applications we need a power meter that is able to measure quick changes in power. We would like to achieve sub-millisecond switching and therefore need a power meter to be able to take readings much faster than 1ms, so we are able to monitor the power modulation. We also need to be able to read small powers. Our goal is up to 20mW so we need to read a large range around 20mW.

3.1.7.1 ThorLabs S120C and PM100D

The photodiode has a wavelength range of 400nm – 1100nm. It measures power from 50nW to 50mW. It has a response time of less than a microsecond and a resolution of 1nW. This is a silicon

detector It has a diameter of 30.5mm and a thickness of 12.7mm. The aperture size is 9.5mm in diameter. This diode is used for measuring low power lasers which is perfect for our application. We can also use the power meter that is compatible with the diode and is the PM100D. It has a power range from 100pW to 200W. The responsivity is 1pA/W which means that the diode is the limiting factor for response time.

3.1.7.2 Thorlabs S120C and PM103

This power meter setup uses the same photodiode as the previous setup but a new meter. This meter has a sampling speed of 100,000 samples per second. The minimum and maximum power readings depend on the photodiode. This meter connects to a computer using Mini USB.

3.1.7.3 Newport 918D-SL-OD2R and 844-PE-USB

This power meter combination from Newport offers a much wider range of power detection with a range of 2W to 20pW for the diode and the meter. The diode has a rise time of less than 2 microseconds but the meter itself has a sampling rate of 15Hz so we are limited by the meter. The aperture size is 11.3mm in diameter and the power meter connects through USB. The detector semiconductor is made of silicon.

3.1.7.4 DET100A2

This photodiode is unique because it can be connected directly to an oscilloscope for its power reading. This means we can borrow an oscilloscope from our labs to directly connect to this diode. It is rated for a wavelength range between 320nm – 1100nm. It has a very fast response time of 35ns. The detector has a diameter of 9.8mm. The diode connects to any power meter or oscilloscope using a BNC cable

3.1.7.5 Why DET100A2 Thorlabs

Table 3.1.7.1 Power Meter Comparison

	ThorLabs S120C and PM100D (Obsolete)	Thorlabs S120C and PM103	Newport 918D-SL-OD2R and 844-PE-USB	DET100A2 Thorlabs
Wavelength Range	400 nm – 1100 nm	400 nm – 1100 nm	400 nm – 1100nm	320 nm – 1100 nm
Power Range	50 nW – 50 mW	50 nW – 50 mW	20 pW – 2 W	Unknown
Diode Diameter	9.5 mm	9.5 mm	11.3 mm	9.8 mm
Minimum Sampling Rate	<1us	<1 us	0.066 ms	Meter Dependent
Diode Material	Silicon	Silicon	Silicon	Silicon
Price	\$1740.66	\$1109.61	\$1762	\$204.65

For our project the most important part of the power meter is how fast it can detect power changes. Since we need to switch the polarization states quickly, we need to be able to see the power reading changes throughout the process. This means we need many samples in under a millisecond. This makes the Newport meter setup unusable for our purposes. The PM100D went obsolete but it is a fantastic choice. We decided to use the DET100A2 because it can read powers very quickly with its 35ns rise time. We also chose this detector because with its ability to connect to a borrowed

oscilloscope that makes this meter setup easy to use and versatile. It also saves us money from having to buy another power meter.

3.1.8 Polarizers

A polarizer is a very similar product to the one we will be making. A polarizer transmits one polarization while blocking or absorbing orthogonal polarization. There are several different kinds of polarizers like wire grid polarizers. These devices use metal wires aligned vertically. When vertical electric field from a photon encounters the wire grid it induces a current in the wires. This current oscillates back and forth across the wire which then creates another electric field which opposes the incident field. This causes the electric field that is parallel to the wire grid to be reflected or absorbed and the electric field that is perpendicular passes through. By turning the direction of these wires, we can control which polarizations get absorbed and which pass through (Young 1965). Another group of polarizers use birefringent crystals to change the speed of the extraordinary and ordinary polarizations. Then in polarizers like a Glan-Taylor prism you create an airgap in the crystal. This gap has a very specific angle so that one ray gets reflected and one transmits. This allows only one polarization to pass through (Protopopov 2014).

We need a polarizer because as light passes through our system it will be either polarized into a random linear angle or randomly polarized depending on whether we use a laser or LED. Using a polarizer before the light passes through our system ensures that the light is initially polarized in a specific known direction. Rotating the birefringent crystal is going to shift the polarization around the Poincare Sphere but we need to have a known starting point so that we know how much to turn the crystal to achieve a specific desired polarization. The beam also needs to pass through a polarizer after going through the crystal. The reason for this is that by passing through a second polarizer we turn a change in polarization into a change in power. When the light is aligned with this secondary polarizer we will achieve a max power reading on our power meter. Then as we rotate the polarization on the Poincare Sphere the power will fluctuate until we reach the orthogonal polarization which will then allow us to achieve a minimum power reading. This is how we will determine that we can achieve orthogonal polarization states.

The most important factor for a polarizer in our application is that it achieves a high extinction ratio. This ratio describes how much light passes through of a desired polarization vs how much light is of orthogonal polarization. We would like to achieve >1000:1 extinction ratio so our polarizer needs to have an extinction ratio higher than this so that we are not limited to this products extinction ratio.

3.1.8.1 CCM5-PBS201/M Thorlabs

One option is to replace the beam splitter that the light will pass through twice with a polarizing beam splitter. This will allow the light to be linearly polarized in a known direction as we enter our crystal subsystem. Then the light will retroreflect back into the polarizing beam splitter and again turn change in polarization into a change in power as described before. These polarizers work specifically by reflecting one polarization and transmitting another like the Glan-Taylor

prism. This beam splitter is a 30mm cube that has a wavelength range from 420nm – 680nm. This beamsplitter is also relatively inexpensive with a price of \$331.76. This beam splitter has an extinction ratio of 1000:1 when transmitting and 100:1 when reflecting.

3.1.8.2 Newport 46-575

With this type of polarizer, the light with a polarization that aligns with the polarizer's transmission axis will pass through and the light that does not will either get reflected or absorbed. This polarizer is easy to work with because it is in the shape of a glass lens and is mounted. It has a diameter of 22.5mm. It is uncoated so there will be unwanted reflections, and the product will work with a wavelength from 400 nm – 700 nm. The highest extinction ratio this polarizer achieves is 2,700:1. This ratio is above our limit allowing it to work in our system; however, this ratio is only achieved with a wavelength range of 550 nm – 650 nm. When in the 400 nm range the extinction ratio is 19:1.

3.1.8.3 Thorlabs GT5

This is a Glan-Taylor polarizer as described before. These polarizers are useful because their specific design allows for extremely high extinction ratios. Specifically for this device the ratio is 100,000:1. This polarizer is uncoated and works with a wavelength range from 350 nm – 2.3 μ m.

Table 3.1.8.1 Polarizer Comparison

	Thorlabs GT5	Newport 46-575	CCM5-PBS201/M Thorlabs
Wavelength Range	350 nm – 2.3 μ m	400 nm – 700 nm	420 nm – 680 nm
Extinction Ratio	100,000:1	19:1 at 400nm 200:1 at 500nm >2700:1 at 550nm- 650nm 600:1 at 700nm	1000:1 transmission 100:1 reflection
Aperture Size	6.5 mm x 6.5 mm	22.5mm	16mm
Price	\$626.65	\$49.29	\$331.76

3.1.8.4 Why Thorlabs GT5

The most important feature of a polarizer for our needs is its extinction ratio. For this reason, the GT5 polarizer is the best option. If the polarizer does not have a high extinction ratio, then our overall extinction ratio will be limited by the polarizer. We would like to show that our polarizer can achieve at least a 1000:1 extinction ratio across the entire wavelength range. This means that the Newport polarizer would not work as well for us even though its price is extremely attractive. The Newport polarizer can only achieve higher than 1000:1 at a specific wavelength range in the visible spectrum, so we would be limited unless we only use a light source in this range. The CCM5 has a high enough extinction ratio as we are transmitting through the system, but it is only the minimum that we would like to achieve. We would like to show that our system can achieve

higher than 1000:1 extinction ratio so we need a polarizer that far exceeds this ratio and the GT5 offers this. Unfortunately, it achieves our goal at a high price range.

3.1.9 Retroreflector

A Retroreflector and a mirror are very similar devices in the fact that they reflect light. These two devices do these things in different ways, however. A mirror reflects light at an angle that is the same as its incident angle. This follows from the law of reflection that states $\theta_i = \theta_r$. A retroreflector reflects light back to its source no matter the incident angle. To do this we use vector math. If we write our incoming light as three motion vectors depending on how the light is coming at our reflector. These mirrors are aligned so that the reflected light has a direction vector that is exactly opposite of the incoming ray (Egidi 2018).

3.1.9.1 Thorlabs PS974M-A

These retroreflectors from Thorlabs are compact at a 10mm diameter which means they can fit easily into our setup. The design of these reflectors is a prism shape from the three mirrors to be able to reflect the light back at exactly the opposite direction it came in at. This device works from a wavelength range from 350 nm – 700 nm.

3.1.9.2 Newport 50441-0505AL

This reflector has a diameter of 12.7mm which also allows it to fit into our system with ease. This product is made of aluminum and has a reflective coating on the inside to reflect the light with high efficiency. This mirror is also not wavelength dependent on allowing any beam to enter and work the same.

3.1.9.3 Edmund Optics 49-079

This reflector has a diameter of 25.4mm. This reflector is made of silver and has a protective overcoat which makes this product inexpensive. This device has a wavelength range from 400 nm – 2500 nm.

Table 3.1.9.1 Retroreflector Comparison

	Thorlabs PS974M-A	Newport 50441-0505AL	Edmund Optics 49-079
Diameter	10mm	12.7mm	7.16mm
Material	N-BK7	Al	Silver
Beam Deviation	<3 arcsec	5 arcsec	5 arcsec
Price	\$205.91	\$390	\$286.20

3.1.9.4 Why Thorlabs PS974M-A

For our project one feature that stands out is the beam displacement in our output is very small since we are retroreflecting the light and doing a double pass setup. This setup allows us to achieve very small beam deviations from refraction through the crystal known as beam walk-off. This

feature depends solely on how well the retroreflector can keep the light on its initial path which means that the beam deviation is the most important factor for this reflector. This led us to choose the Thorlabs reflector because it has the smallest beam deviation. This reflector also has the smallest price which matches our goal of the cheapest system.

3.1.10 Lens

In this project, a lens will be an important technology when combined with the LED. LEDs, while having a larger bandwidth than lasers, also have a larger divergence angle than lasers. We need our light to follow a singular path over a relatively large distance. That means to accomplish this with an LED we need to have it collimated. To collimate a light source, we just need a lens. If we place the LED at the focal point of a lens, we will output a collimated beam (Qiao 2022). Some important qualities of the lens affect how much optical power leaves the lens as a collimated beam. The amount of light that gets collimated is called numerical aperture (NA). The higher NA value is the higher the power of the collimated beam will be. NA is determined by the diameter of the lens as well as the focal length of the lens (Piston 1998). To achieve the highest NA and power of the beam, we need a large diameter lens with a small focal length.

3.1.10.1 ACL25416U Thorlabs

Thorlabs has a large selection of aspheric lenses. This type of lens means that the curvature of the lens is not constant. This leads to having sharper focusing and larger NAs. This lens has a staggering NA of 0.79. This means it will be able to collect a large portion of the light from our LED. This lens also has a diameter of 25.4mm and a focal length of 16mm. These qualities allow us to use this lens in a very confined space and be able to gather a large portion of our light that escapes the LED.

3.1.10.2 KPA19AR.14 Newport

This is another aspheric lens. Unlike the ThorLabs lens this lens is coated with an antireflective coating which is designed for 430 nm – 700 nm, so more light from our design will pass through with this coating. This Newport lens is also specifically designed for the purpose of light collection and has a diameter of 25mm. It also has a focal length of 18.8mm. This gives this lens an NA of 0.66.

3.1.10.3 23-813 Edmund Optics

This condenser lens is used for light collimation like the other two lenses. It is also an aspheric lens. This lens offers an extremely high NA compared to most other lenses. It has a diameter of 16mm and a focal length of 8.3mm. The combination of this small focal length and large diameter means that this lens has a NA of 0.96

3.1.10.4 Why ACL25416U Thorlabs?

Table 3.1.10.1 Lens Comparison

	ACL25416U Thorlabs	KPA19AR.14 Newport	23-813 Edmund Optics
Diameter	25.4 mm	25 mm	16 mm
Focal Length	16 mm	18.75 mm	8.3 mm
Material	B270	L-BAL 35	H-K9L

Numerical Aperture	0.79	0.66	0.96
Price	\$22.00	\$459	\$62.54

We are using lenses in the system to collect light from our LED. The amount of light collected by a lens is measured by its NA. While the Edmund Optics lens has the highest NA we decided to use the Thorlabs lens for a couple of reasons. We used the LED's viewing angle which is 80 degrees to make this choice. By using this value and the diameter and focal length of the lens we can determine how much light gets collected by the lens. We use the formula $r_{\text{beam}} = f_{\text{lens}} \times \tan(\theta)$ to calculate the radius of the beam when it hits the lens. For the Thorlabs lens this value is 13mm which leads to a 26mm diameter. For the Newport lens this radius is 15.7mm which leads to a 31.4mm diameter. Finally, for the Edmund Optics lens the radius of the beam is 6.96mm and the diameter is 13.93mm. By these calculations the Thorlabs lens and the Edmund Optics lens both have diameters of lens that would encompass the entire LED diameter. This means that both lenses would effectively collimate the light for our purposes. We chose to use the Thorlabs lens because it is 3 times cheaper than the Edmund optics lens. Since we need two of these lenses, one for collimation and one for focusing on the power meter, we chose the Thorlabs lens to save \$80.

3.1.11 Beamsplitter

For our project, we are using beamsplitters to combine light sources for the light collection subsystem. Beamsplitters do this by acting as a semitransparent mirror angled at 45 degrees to incoming light. To create this semitransparent mirror these technologies are two pieces of glass that when put together form a cube. These two pieces of glass are each right triangle and when put together another material is added between them. This change in materials is how the splitters get their semitransparent mirror. When the light hits the mirror, some of it will pass through and some of it will get reflected (Gilo 1992). For our case the beamsplitter is allowing us to take two beams and combine them into one beam. This will allow us to have as many light sources as we want, and they all, after going through the beamsplitters, overlap as they continue through the system. We will only be using one light source at a time, so doing this will let us align all our light sources and just turn them on and off as we need them. To achieve this goal from our beamsplitters we need beamsplitters with a 50:50 transmission to reflection ratio. We are going to need one beam splitter to take the light pass through our crystal and one beam splitter for every light source after the first one. The amount of beamsplitters we need is substantial, so we need our beamsplitters to be inexpensive so we can stay under budget.

3.1.11.1 47-122 Edmund Optics

This beamsplitter from Edmund Optics has an antireflective coating rated for the wavelength range of 430 nm – 670 nm. It has a beam splitting ratio of 50% transmission and 50% reflection. This splitter is made from BK7 glass. This cube also has a size of 20mm.

3.1.11.2 10BC17MB.1 Newport

This splitter from Newport is designed to work well for combining different lasers. The splitter has a higher absorption rate than normal but also has minimal polarization sensitivity. This is important for us because we do not want the beamsplitter to interfere with our extinction ratio. If we have a beamsplitter that has different reflection coefficients for different polarizations, then we

will have a lower extinction ratio. This cube has a size of 25.4 mm and has an antireflection coating that is rated for 400 nm – 700 nm.

3.1.11.3 CCM5-BS016/M Thorlabs

This beamsplitter from Thorlabs comes in a 16mm cage system. There is a coating applied between the two pieces of glass to ensure the correct amount of light is transmitted and reflected. All the faces of this cube have an antireflective coating rated for 400 nm – 700 nm. The cage system for this beam splitter allows for easy mounting and maneuvering.

Table 3.1.3.1 Beam Splitter Comparison

	47-122 Edmund Optics	10BC17MB.1 Newport	CCM5-BS016/M Thorlabs
Wavelength Range	430 nm – 670 nm	400 nm – 700 nm	400 nm – 700 nm
Size	20 mm x 20 mm	25.4 mm x 25.4 mm	16 mm x 16 mm
Transmission to Reflection Ratio	50:50	45:45	50:50
Price	\$306.34	\$282	\$224.99

3.1.11.4 Why CCM5-BS016/M Thorlabs

Since we are using multiple beam splitters, we need these to be cheap. We will be using three light sources which means we will need 3 light sources. This leads us to choose the Thorlabs beamsplitter. This splitter has low loss from absorption unlike the Newport beamsplitter and is the cheapest of the three options. This splitter also comes in a cube that is easy to mount unlike the other beamsplitters which we would need to mount separately. Using this beamsplitter will save us the most money.

3.1.12 Mirror

Mirrors play a crucial role in optical projects. Mirrors are used to guide light along a select path. Mirrors have a property called reflectivity that allows them to bounce light off of themselves. In our project we use these mirrors to guide the light from the sources to beamsplitters and then into the crystal. We need high reflectivity mirrors for our wavelength which means we need dielectric mirrors. Dielectric mirrors use layers of transparent material with different refractive indexes to reflect light. These layers are spaced specifically for certain wavelengths of light which make them not applicable for every wavelength. This is different from metallic mirrors because metallic mirrors have a much higher absorption and generally lower reflectivity's than dielectric mirrors (Perry 1965).

3.1.12.1 70-667 Edmund Optics

This is a dielectric mirror that reflects a broad range of wavelengths. This mirror is rated for 400nm – 750nm. The spacing between the material layers in the mirror is $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of the wavelength. This mirror has a reflectivity of greater than 98%.

3.1.12.2 BB03-E02 Thorlabs

This is a smaller diameter lens with only 7mm in diameter. It also has a wavelength range of 400nm – 750nm. This mirror has an average reflection of over 99%. This mirror also has a spacing of $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of the wavelength between each layer.

3.1.12.3 05Q20BB.HR2 Newport

This mirror has an average reflectance of 98%. It has a 12.7mm diameter. This mirror has a larger bandwidth than others being from 350nm – 1100nm. This mirror is made from silica substrates and has metallic dielectric coatings.

Table 3.1.3.1 Mirror Comparison

	BB03-E02 Thorlabs	05Q20BB.HR2 Newport	70-667 Edmund Optics
Diameter	7 mm	12.7 mm	12.5 mm
Wavelength Range	400 nm – 750 nm	350 nm – 1100 nm	400 nm – 750 nm
Reflectivity	99%	98%	>98%
Price	\$49.85	\$161	\$66.25

3.1.12.4 Why BB03-E02 Thorlabs

The most important factor for our application is that we have inexpensive mirrors. This is because we are using several of them so the more expensive they are, the more they impact our budget. We also want mirrors that have high reflectivity so that we lose as little power as possible. This will maximize the optical power we can receive on our power meter. This led us to choose the mirrors from Thorlabs. Since most of our optics come from Thorlabs we save money on delivery fees by ordering these mirrors from them as well. These are also the cheapest mirrors that have the highest reflectivity.

3.1.13 Voltage Regulator

Voltage regulators will be used in our system to regulate the voltage going into the microcontroller and the laser diode. The laser diode operates at 5 V while the microcontroller operates at 3.3 V. Thus, when deciding on a voltage regulator, the voltage regulator needs to be able to handle to output a 5 V or a 3.3 V value depending on which device the voltage regulator is powering.

3.1.13.1 Linear Voltage Regulator

A linear voltage regulator works by having a resistive method (usually a BJT or MOSFET) to regulate the output voltage by varying the current that goes through the resistive method (IC Components Limited , Teja). However, a drawback with this voltage regulation method is the heat dissipation that comes with regulating the voltage through the transistor which would lead to the need to have a heat sink method to ensure that the voltage regulator would not cause damages to the PCB board (Teja). Another drawback of the linear voltage regulator is its efficiency due to the heat dissipation causes the linear voltage regulator to have an efficiency of between 20% and 60% (Teja). Linear voltage regulator also has the limitation of only being able to decrease the input voltage to the desired output voltage (Teja). However, for our system, we want to decrease the input voltage to the desired output voltage and thus, this limitation of the linear voltage regulator would not be an issue for our system. An advantage of utilizing the linear voltage regulator is its

simplicity since they are easy to use and implement into a circuit system due to only needing a few extra components to ensure it is working properly as intended (Teja). Another advantage of the linear voltage regulator is its noise free output voltage which makes the linear voltage regulator helpful for audio systems and analog circuits where it is favorable for noise to be minimalized for performance (IC Components Limited).

3.1.13.2 Switching Voltage Regulator

A switching voltage regulator works by utilizing the transistor as a high-speed switch in which the transistor is turned on or off to keep the output voltage consistently at the desired value (IC Components Limited , Teja). This leads to the advantages that the switching voltage regulator presents. Due to the on or off state of the transistor within the switching voltage regulator, the heat dissipation of the voltage regulator is a lot smaller in comparison to the heat dissipation of the linear voltage regulator (Teja). This efficiency in heat dissipation leads to the switching voltage regulator having a better efficiency as it can be as efficient up to 95% (Teja). Another benefit of the switching voltage regulator is that the output voltage can be lower or higher than the input voltage, but for our system, only having the output voltage being lower than the input voltage will be our focus (Teja). However, a drawback of the switching voltage regulator is its complexity as the switching voltage regulator requires additional components such as inductors and capacitors to ensure it works properly as intended (IC Components Limited , Teja). Another drawback of the switching voltage regulator is that the output voltage could have a lot of interference and noise which leads to the switching voltage regulator being often used in circuit systems that need a lot of current or needs to save power (IC Components Limited , Teja).

Table 3.1.13.1 Voltage Regulator Type Comparison

Features	Linear	Switching
Output Voltage	Fixed or Adjustable	Fixed or Adjustable
Heat Generation	High	Low
Efficiency	Low (30% to 60%)	High (70% to 95%)
Complexity	Simple	High
Step Movement	Step-Down	Step-Down, Step-Up

3.1.13.3 Voltage Regulator Type Chosen

The switching voltage regulator will be chosen as the voltage regulator in our system. The reason being is that the heat dissipation and the efficiency of the switching voltage regulator would be helpful in the creation of PCB boards as heat dissipation of components is often a consideration that must be taken into account when creating the design of a PCB board. However, a drawback of the switching voltage regulator is its complexity due to the use of inductors and capacitors to ensure the switching voltage regulator is working as intended. This drawback may lead to additional workload for the team but utilizing circuit simulations such as Webench by Texas Instruments can help with this additional workload and would ensure the circuit design will meet the requirements needed to power the devices in our system.

3.1.13.4 Buck Regulators

Buck regulators are a type of switching voltage regulator in which the output voltage is smaller than the input voltage (Teja). Buck regulators work by switching on and off the transistor in which

the energy from the input voltage is stored in magnetic fields to keep the output voltage constant at a certain value (IC Components Limited).

Table 3.1.13.2 Switching Voltage Regulator Comparison

Features	BD9781HFP-TR	LM2576T-ADJ	LM27402
Max Output Current	4 A	3 A	30 A
Efficiency	75% – 80%	75% – 88%	90% – 97%
Input Voltage	7 V – 35 V	4 V – 40 V	3 V – 20 V
Output Voltage	1 V – 35 V	3.3 V – 37 V	0.6 V – 18.6 V
Cost	\$5.69	\$2.82	\$3.12

3.1.13.5 Why LM2576T-ADJ?

The LM2576T-ADJ model was chosen as the switching voltage regulator for our system. The reason the LM2576T-ADJ model was chosen was due to its cost while still meeting the requirements needed for the circuit since the LM2576T-ADJ model was the cheapest model amongst the three options. The switching voltage regulator has an output current of 3 A which meets the current requirements to power the devices along with the current flow from the chosen power adapter. The voltage output has enough range to power the microcontroller and the laser diode along with being an adjustable voltage regulator. Two voltage regulators can be used in the circuit in which one voltage regulator will be set to 5 V to be used to power the laser diode while the other voltage regulator will be set to 3.3 V to power the microcontroller. The input voltage range also offers a wide range which allows a more variety of options when choosing a power adapter that can power our system.

3.1.14 LED Driver

For the LED chosen, an LED driver will be utilized to ensure the proper current and voltage is powering the LED. There are two different types of LED drivers, constant current LED drivers and constant voltage LED drivers. A constant current LED driver ensures a steady flow of current goes into the LED by changing the voltage that the LED receives, usually around the forward voltage rating value of the LED (Unitop , Wan). A constant voltage LED driver maintains a steady voltage value but has the drawback of not limiting the current flow to the LED (Unitop , Wan). For our LED, the datasheet recommends selecting an LED driver that does not go over the maximum current (which in our case is 1 A) and sufficient forward voltage is supplied (which in our case is 3.8 V). Thus, based on the recommendations of the LED's datasheet, a constant current LED driver will be utilized in our system to power the LED.

Table 3.1.14.1 LED Driver

Features	TLM4036DC-1000	LD DS-1000HW	RCD-24-1.00/W
Max Current	1 A	1 A	1 A
Input Voltage	10 V – 30 V	12 V – 56 V	6 V – 36 V
Output Voltage	2 – 26 V	2 – 45 V	3 V – 31 V
Power	26 W	45 W	33 W
Cost	\$22.98	\$8.87	\$24.44

The LDDS-1000HW model was chosen as the LED driver for our system. The reason the LDDS-1000HW model was chosen was due to its on/off switch and the cost. The TLM4036DC-1000 model did not offer on/off switch capability while the LDDS-1000HW and RCD-24-1.00/W models did which will be utilized in our system with the ESP32 microcontroller to turn on or off the LED based on the user's input. The LDDS-1000HW model turns on when voltage is applied to the switch pin while the RCD-24-1.00/W model turns on when no voltage is applied to the switch pin. Thus, the LDDS-1000HW model would be more power effective for our system since the LED only turns on when the user wants the LED to be turned on. The LDDS-1000HW model is also the cheapest model amongst the three models compared. Therefore, the LDDS-1000HW model was chosen for its on/off switching mode and its cost in comparison to the other LED driver models.

3.1.15 Load Switch

A load switch will be used in our circuit system to turn on or off the laser diode based on the user's input in the GUI. The ESP32 will connect to the load switch to tell the switch to be closed or open. If the user inputs to turn on the laser diode, the ESP32 will send an output voltage signal to close the switch to permit the voltage and current to flow to the laser diode to be powered on. If the user inputs to turn off the laser diode, the ESP32 will send an output voltage signal to open the switch to prevent the flow of voltage and current to the laser diode to ensure it does not power on.

A load switch works by having a MOSFET act as the switch along with a MOSFET driver that controls the amount of current that flows into the gate side to determine whether the MOSFET is on or off and ensures that it smoothly turns on or off (Schweber). When choosing a load switch, it is important to consider the maximum voltage and current ratings to determine how much the load switch can handle to ensure the load switch can work properly as intended (Schweber).

Table 3.2.15.1 Load Switch Comparison

Features	TPS27081ADDCR	TPS22958NDGKR	TPS22918TDBVTQ1
Input Voltage	1.2 V – 8 V	2.5 V – 5.5 V	1 – 5.5 V
Max Output Current	3 A	4 A	2 A
Output Configuration	High Side	High Side	High Side
Interface	On/Off	On/Off	On/Off
Cost	\$0.77	\$1.10	\$1.20

The TPS27081ADDCR model was chosen as the load switch for our system due to its voltage range, current rating, and the cost of the model. Amongst the three models compared, the TPS27081ADDCR model was the cheapest amongst the models. The TPS27081ADDCR also meets the input voltage requirements since the input voltage in our system will be 5 V to power the laser diode. The current rating also meets the requirements of our system since the laser diode needs less than 1 A to turn on. The TPS27081ADDCR model is also compatible with the ESP32 since the ON/OFF pin of the TPS27081ADDCR model can be controlled by the GPIO pins of the ESP32 as the ON/OFF pin only requires an input voltage that is greater than 1 V while having a maximum input voltage of 8 V. The GPIO pins of the ESP32 outputs a voltage value that is within

the range of the ON/OFF pin of the TPS27081ADDCR model and thus, the ESP32 can be utilized to control when the TPS27081ADDCR model is on or off.

3.1.16 Power Adapter

The purpose of the power adapter in our system is to convert the AC power of the wall outlet to DC power since our devices use DC voltage and current to power on. It is essential to choose a power adapter that can meet the power, voltage, and current ratings of the overall system. If the voltage rating of the power adapter is too low, the device may not be able to turn on or will not work properly as intended; however, on the other hand, if the voltage rating is too high, the device can be damaged or lower the life span of the device (Busch). If the power rating of the power adapter is too low, the power adapter could be damaged from the devices in the system trying to draw more current than the power adapter can handle (Busch). On the other hand, if the power rating of the power adapter is too high, the devices in the system can still work properly as intended since the devices will only draw the current needed for them to function (Busch). This, however, does not apply to the LED device since it is a current control device in which we need to create a constant current driver that will ensure that only the needed amount of current the LED needs to function is flowing into the device. Therefore, it is essential when we choose the power adapter for our system that it can meet the overall power, voltage, and current ratings of the whole system.

Table 3.2.2.1 Adapter Model Comparisons

Features	MDS-030AAC07 AB	B00ZWU5L0C	16-00216
Output Voltage	7 V	3 V - 12 V	12 V
Output Current	3 A	2 A	3 A
Power Rating	21 W	24 W	36 W
Plug Size	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm
Cost	\$27.64	\$13.90	\$11.81

The 16-00216 model was chosen as the power adapter due to its output voltage and output current ratings. The 16-00216 model outputs a voltage value of 12 V which meets the requirements of this system to power the microcontroller, LED, and laser diode. The 16-00216 model also outputs a current rating of 3 A which ensures a stable current supply for the system. The system requires a current rating of at least 1.8 A but to ensure that there is enough current in the system to power the devices, the 16-00216 model was chosen for its 3 A current rating. The 16-00216 model is also the cheapest model in comparison to the MDS-030AAC07 AB model and the B00ZWU5L0C model. Thus, the 16-00216 model was chosen to meet the output voltage and current ratings needed for our system as well as being the cheapest model choice out of the three models compared.

3.1.17 Power Jack

For our system, the power adapter needs to be able to deliver the power from the wall outlet to the PCB board for the microcontroller, LED, and laser diodes to be powered on. This will be done

through having the power adapter connect to a power jack that will deliver the needed voltage and current to the devices through the soldering of the exposed wires of the power jack to the PCB board. The power jack needs to meet the voltage and current ratings of the power adapter to ensure reliability in delivering the power to our system (Smoot). Another aspect that needs to be considered is the gender of the power adapter (Smoot). The chosen power adapter had a male connector and thus, the power jack needs to be a female connector. Another consideration is the plug size of the power adapter in which the barrel size of the power jack needs to be the same size as the plug size of the power adapter to ensure that the power adapter can be plugged into the power jack (Smoot). Lastly, the polarity of the power adapter needs to be considered as well (Smoot). The chosen power adapter had a polarity in which the center pin was connected to the positive polarity while the outer sleeve was connected to the negative polarity. Thus, when considering the power jack, the power jack also needs to be connected to the positive polarity in the center pin and the outer sleeve needs to be connected to the negative polarity.

Table 3.2.3.1 Jack Model Comparisons

Features	B07CTMY9KG	B072BXB2Y8	B08PYT6HZ2
Voltage Rating	12 V	12 V	12 V
Current Rating	3 A	5 A	15 A
Barrel Size	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm	5.5 mm x 2.1 mm
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Polarity	Center Positive	Center Positive	Center Positive
Cost	\$5.99	\$9.49	\$9.99

The B072BXB2Y8 was chosen for meeting the voltage and current ratings required to handle the chosen power adapter along with having a barrel size that would ensure proper connection. The B072BXB2Y8 was also chosen for its female gender and having a positive polarity at its center. The B072BXB2Y8 was chosen over the other wires due to being an 18 AWG wire. The 18 AWG wire is often used to power low voltage devices along with being cost friendly while still having great performance and durability (Origin Data Global Limited). The B07CTMY9KG model is also an 18 AWG wire type; however, the B072BXB2Y8 model was chosen instead as the power jack due to its increased current capability which ensures proper current control between the power adapter and our system.

3.2 Power Management

3.2.1 Power Delivery

For our system, the main power source will be from the wall outlet. The reason for this is the wall outlet supplies a constant power source without worry of losing charge unlike the battery. Another reason is that various components for our system already use the wall outlet as their power source such as the laptop and the motor with its DC power supply. Thus, to make the power delivery system simple, the power source will focus on the wall outlet as supplying the power to the whole

system. The next challenge comes from figuring out how to utilize the wall outlet power to power the various components in the system.

For the laptop, a simple laptop charger will be used to power the laptop and ensure it does not lose charge while it is running the system. The motor system gains its power from the DC power supply with the DC power supply being powered by the wall outlet. The DAQ card for the motor utilizes a USB device to power its system and to transfer data between the laptop and the motor; thus, the DAQ card will be connected to the laptop to get its required voltage and current it needs to be powered and for it to transfer data between the DAQ card and the laptop. This leaves the microcontroller, LED, and the laser diode to be powered by the system. The microcontroller, LED, and laser diode cannot connect directly to the wall outlet and there is a limited amount of USB ports that the laptop can handle. Thus, a power adapter along with a power jack will be utilized to be able to deliver power to these devices. Voltage regulators will be used to ensure that the proper voltage is being delivered to the microcontroller and laser diode while an LED driver will be utilized to ensure the proper current and voltage is being delivered to the LED.

Table 3.2.1.1 Power Management

Component	Power Consumption	Operating Voltage	Operating Current
ESP32	Typical: 1,500 mW Max: 2,160 mW	Min: 3 V Max: 3.6 V	Typical: 500 mA Max: 600 mA
LED	Typical: 3,800 mW Max: 3,820 mW	Typical: 3.8 V Max: 3.82 V	Max: 1000 mA
Laser Diode (520 nm)	Min: 392 mW Max: 520 mW	Min: 4.9 V Max: 5.2 V	Typical: 80 mA Max: 100 mA
Laser Diode (635 nm)	Min: 343 mW Max: 468 mW	Min: 4.9 V Max: 5.2 V	Typical: 70 mA Max: 90 mA
Motor Driver	Typical: 60 W Max: 240 W	± 15 V to ± 24 V	Typical: 4 A Max: 10 A
Motor	Typical: 60 W Max: 240 W	± 15 V to ± 24 V	Typical: 4 A Max: 10 A
Laptop	45 W	19.5 V	2.31 A
DAQ Card	727.5 mW to 772.5 mW	4.85 V to 5.15 V	Max: 150 mA
Total System	Typical: 171.76 W Max: 532.74 W	Min: ± 24 V	Typical: 12.11 A Max: 24.25 A

3.3 Communication Protocol

3.3.1 USB

The USB (Universal Serial Bus) protocol will be the communication protocol that will be utilized in our system. The USB protocol will be utilized to transfer data between the laptop and the DAQ

card along with flashing the ESP32 microcontroller with our code. The USB protocol works by have a series of hubs that connect the external devices to the main host hub (which in our case will be the laptop) to determine the timing of how the data is transmitted from the main host hub to the external devices or vice versa (ElProCus). When a new device is connected to the USB port, the main host hub will read the data on that particular device USB hub to determine how to communicate with the new device and assigned the device with its own unique address (ElProCus). The USB protocol has four lines that it utilizes, a power bus (VBus), data transfer lines (D- and D+), and a ground pin (GND) with the data transfer lines indicating the flow of the data transfer (ElProCus). Thus, when utilizing the USB protocol in our system, the USB protocol will be used to communicate between the laptop and DAQ card along with flashing the ESP32 microcontroller and to provide power to the laser diode.

3.4 Software

3.4.1 Programming Languages

3.4.1.1 C

The C programming language offers a variety of benefits. The C programming language is a general-purpose, middle-level programming language that offers usage in low-level programming and supports the function of high-level programming (Greeks for Greeks). C is also a popular choice for embedded system programming due to its direct access to machine level hardware and its dynamic memory allocation (Greeks for Greeks). C is also a heavily supported programming language that offers a variety of library to utilize for various programming projects (Greeks for Greeks). If the C programming language is chosen to program the ESP32 for our project, multiple development environments (such as Arduino IDE) support the C programming language for the ESP32 which will be useful in choosing a development environment for this project.

3.4.1.2 Python

The Python programming language offers a variety of benefits. One of the benefits of Python is the fact that it is a general-purpose programming language that supports object-oriented programming and functional programming (Atwell). Another benefit of Python is its simple syntax programming due to utilizing English keywords instead of punctuation like the C programming language and Python is a forgiving language as well due to simple syntax issues will still be accepted by Python as an acceptable expression (Atwell). Python also supports a variety of libraries to help with programming projects to add a feature or functionality to the program without having to write additional code (Mikke). If the Python programming language is chosen to program the ESP32, a limited amount of development environments support Python specifically as the programming language for the ESP32. Typically, if a person wants to program in Python to code the ESP32, MicroPython or CircuitPython programming languages would be utilized instead.

3.4.1.3 MicroPython

The MicroPython programming language utilizes the Python 3 programming language to code microcontrollers and embedded systems (Atwell). The benefit of using MicroPython is its simple syntax programming like Python but has the drawback of being unable to utilize the same amount of libraries as Python can and is not a forgiving language like Python (Atwell). Another benefit of the MicroPython is its small memory usage as the MicroPython can work on devices that has a small storage as little as 256 KB of storage and 16 KB of RAM (Rakshit). If the MicroPython programming language is chosen to program the ESP32, multiple development environments (such as Thonny) support the MicroPython programming language for the ESP32 which offers a variety of choices to choose from for our project.

3.4.1.4 CircuitPython

The CircuitPython builds off the MicroPython programming language but made it more beginner friendly to be more approachable for the wider public (Jacob). CircuitPython offers the benefit of interpreting the code directly which allows the user to see the effects of their code immediately without the need to compile the code (Jacob). CircuitPython also offers the benefit of turning the microcontroller into a plug-and-play device which avoids the hassle of configuring the microcontroller to work with the development environment and the programming language (Jacob). CircuitPython also offers the benefit of supporting a wide variety of libraries but does not offer the full range of libraries support on Python due to CircuitPython being unable to access low-level hardware on the microcontroller (Jacob).

3.4.1.5 Why C?

The reason the C programming language was chosen was for its development environment support. The Python programming language has a limited amount of development environment support and while the MicroPython and CircuitPython have more development environment support, their limited library support may not support the scope of this project. Thus, the C programming language was chosen as the programming language that will be utilized in our project to program the ESP32.

3.4.2 Development Environment

3.4.2.1 Arduino IDE

The Arduino IDE offers the benefits of being easy to use due to an easy user interface and little configuration needs to be done to start coding which makes the Arduino IDE a beginner friendly development environment to use (Voss). Another benefit of the Arduino IDE is its extensive library support with many of them can be utilized with the ESP32 microcontroller along with the large community support that offers a variety of help and tutorials to get started with utilizing the Arduino IDE to program an ESP32 (Voss). Another benefit of the Arduino IDE is its fast compiling time as even complex Wi-Fi or Bluetooth programs can be compiled within minutes which would will be helpful with developing and prototyping the code (Voss). If the Arduino

IDE is chosen as the development environment to program the ESP32, its fast-compiling time and beginner friendly setup would be helpful with prototyping and developing the code for the ESP32.

3.4.2.2 Espressif IDE (ESP-IDF)

The ESP-IDF is the official ESP32 development environment supported by the ESP32's company (Espressif) and is typically utilized through the Espressif IDE or an extension in Visual Studio Code (Voss). The benefit of utilizing the ESP-IDF is its full hardware control since the ESP-IDF has access to the ESP32's subsystems which permits further hardware performance customization (Voss). Another benefit of the ESP-IDF is its scalability as the ESP-IDF can scale from prototypes to commercial production with minimal rework of the code along with continuously support to update the program to ensure compatibility with new versions of the ESP microcontrollers (Voss). The ESP-IDF also has extensive documentation support that explains the subsystems, configuration file, and API when utilizing this development environment. If the ESP-IDF is chosen as the development environment to program the ESP32, its extensive documentation would be helpful with starting out but runs at the risk of having a steep learning curve.

3.4.2.3 Why Arduino IDE?

The reason the Arduino IDE was chosen as the development environment for our project was due to its beginner friendly nature and its fast prototyping. The ESP-IDF has more hardware control over the ESP32, but this complexity is not needed for our project since the ESP32 will be enabling the switches on the load switch and the LED driver. The most complex part of the ESP32 is the Bluetooth capability but the Arduino IDE has multiple libraries that support Bluetooth capability for the ESP32. Thus, the Arduino IDE will be the development environment for our project to code the ESP32 for its beginner friendly nature, fast prototyping, and libraries that support the scope of what we want the ESP32 to do.

Chapter 5: Application of LLMs

Large language models (LLMs) have evolved immensely with the most popular of these platforms being ChatGPT. This model is developed by Open Ai and was released in 2022. These types of platforms generate text based on a given input from a user. These models are given large amounts of text, hence the 'large' in LLM, to study and are designed to respond to users using the information they are given. Essentially the model "learns" from the internet and can quickly search for users' questions and go through several sources to find correct answers. I have had this tool for several pieces of the project to quickly search for the answers to my questions. This model can effectively be used for research, but careful consideration is needed. Since LLMs searches the internet for answers it may come across misinformation and present it to the user as fact. This means while using software like this; one needs to carefully check the answers that come from it and cross-check it with your own knowledge and knowledge that you have researched. The best feature I have found using LLMs is finding specific technologies that can be used in the project

like lenses. By telling ChatGPT I was able to input information like our LEDs full viewing angle and power to find a lens that would collect most of the light emitted from the LED. In this chapter we plan to show how LLMs have aided or hurt our progression in this project.

Each member of the team used these applications differently and of varied frequencies, but each of us tried to explore how LLMs could affect our research and the project as a whole. Our team decided to see how ChatGPT could help us with our project instead of other LLMs because of its popularity among laymen. We used this model for things like part acquisition even to general understanding of our project. Below we are going to explain how ChatGPT was able to respond to our questions and how we used this information.

5.1 ChatGPT Use Case 1

For the prompt given and the response from ChatGPT please refer to Appendix C [10a] and [10b].

ChatGPT was able to do a fantastic job explaining the main physics of our project. I appreciate how the model started with a basic understanding of polarization being defined on a fast and slow axis. The model seems to understand that since I am asking this question, I have a basic understanding of what polarization is and gives me an important clarification to my understanding. The model also starts with a brief answer to the question and then dives further into each component. This allows users to see the information they are looking for if they understand the topic and allows users who don't understand to read further to gain further insight. The model does not give any mathematical equations for changing polarization which makes it difficult for the laymen to do a project like this because they will not be able to calculate the necessary factors to determine what kind of polarization one would get using a variable waveplate. The model should go over Stokes parameters and an overview of the Jones matrices for a simple setup of this type of experiment. The model gives a general overview of how to perform an experiment like the one used in this project and what is physically happening to the light as it goes through the waveplate. The model gives a general overview of the resulting polarization if the variable waveplate is tuned to different retardances and mentions the Poincare Sphere. These two points were never proven so it is important to fact check the model to make sure that the information output is accurate. In this case the model is correct about the outcomes of specific retardances and how this relates to the Poincare Sphere. Asking more questions specifically aimed at these points would prompt ChatGPT to dive deeper into these points that it previously had lacked information on. I believe that ChatGPT was able to provide useful information and knowledge on how a system like the one we are designing in this project works. It does not dive into the math of the topic or the specific physics heavy information probably because it is designed for laymen who would have a hard time understanding these topics. ChatGPT was able to give me enough information to understand the basic principles of variable retardance and its effect on polarization.

5.2 ChatGPT Use Case 2

For the prompt given and the response from ChatGPT please refer to Appendix C [11a] and [11b].

ChatGPT did a great job at deciding what kind of lens I may need to collimate my LED. It started by going into the math behind collimating an LED. It begins by showing how a user would find a lens with the correct diameter to create a beam of a specific size. The model does not know if I have any size constraints where certain focal lengths would not be suitable and so gives multiple examples of focal lengths and what kind of diameter lens one would need for these focal lengths.

Importantly the model gives the equation showing how big a beam would be at a specific distance and tells the user that to collimate the beam the distance between the LED and the lens needs to be the focal length. This is important because it tells us exactly how to set up this system even though I did not ask for this specific information. This is useful in case a user thought that just placing the lens in front of the LED at any distance would collimate the beam. The equation that ChatGPT uses is also correct and it is also correct about the information on how to use the lens. Next ChatGPT gave only limited results for lenses. By just using this model it would be challenging to know all the options for lenses but the lenses they do give are viable options to use in this project. It is also good that ChatGPT gives links to these products so users know where they can purchase them. By using the method ChatGPT used to find these lenses the user would ensure that they capture all of the light emitted in an 80-degree cone. The model also gives the user insight into the potential mistakes that a user may face when buying a lens. This allows the user to understand how to use their desired lens. ChatGPT does not give the user any information on the different types of lenses and their uses, which would be helpful in finding other similar products. The model also does not give sources on how it finds the equation used to find the lens. The model also correctly gives further insight into other considerations for finding a lens like if we were looking to make a flat top beam and antireflective coatings.

I think ChatGPT successfully solved the problem of finding lenses for this case. It could have been more helpful if the model gave specific equations for finding how much power goes into the lens in case this is an important consideration for the audience. The model could have also given sources so we could find further information on how to compare lenses and how they differ from one another.

5.3 ChatGPT Use Case 3

For the prompt given and the response from ChatGPT please refer to Appendix C [12a] and [12b]

ChatGPT gave a short and concise response to this prompt. It first explains to the user that the price of these products depends greatly on what you need them for and how accurate they need to be. The LLM then gives a very long list of commercially sold items. It orders these items so that a user can easily see what the cheapest option is and what is the most expensive option. ChatGPT should have given a brief description of each item it gives the user and a comparison between items. It makes little sense to tell a user that the difference in prices depends on how well you need the system to run and then not tell how each system is run at a price range. It does give a concrete option of 1 product from each of the low middle and high-cost groups of the product. It is very good that ChatGPT gave us a wide variety of price ranges and told us when we should use each price range. We also noticed that ChatGPT has “remembered” other prompts that we have given it. At the end of the message, it gives us a tailored message to our needs asking if we need any DACs for engineering uses. This is a nice feature because it allows us not to have to describe to ChatGPT the entire project to get a specific answer to a question. To perform this feature ChatGPT reads through every previous conversation a user has had with it and then responds to the current prompt. The downside of this is that it uses quite as much processing power each time a user wants an answer to one question.

Chapter 6: Hardware Design

6.1 System Hardware Design

6.1.1 Power Supply Delivery

For our system, a single power input will be utilized to power our system. The single power input will be from the power adapter that will be plugged into the power jack. The power jack will then supply the overall voltage and current to our system which will be done through voltage regulators and the LED driver. The system will have a 5 V regulator and a 3.3 V regulator. The 5 V regulator will be utilized to power the laser diode. The 3.3 V regulator will be utilized to power the ESP32 microcontroller. The 5 V regulator and 3.3 V regulator will be on a separate board from the main PCB board for easy testing and troubleshooting of the voltage regulators to ensure it works properly before being added to the main PCB board. The LED driver will be utilized to power the LED and will be on the main PCB board.

6.1.1.1 Voltage Regulator for Laser Diode

The 5 V regulator schematic was built based on the recommendations of the WEBENCH Power Designer given the requirements of a voltage input of 12 V, output voltage of 5 V, output current of 1 A, and utilize the LM2576T-ADJ component. However, a few adjustments were made to the recommended circuit to better match the needs of our system. The L2 and C3 electric components have been added to minimize the output voltage ripple as recommended by the datasheet for the LM2576T-ADJ component. Another adjustment made to the circuit was the addition of the Blue LED to give an indication that the voltage regulator is working. The R3 resistor was added in series to the Blue LED to minimize the voltage and current going through the LED to ensure that the LED works as intended.

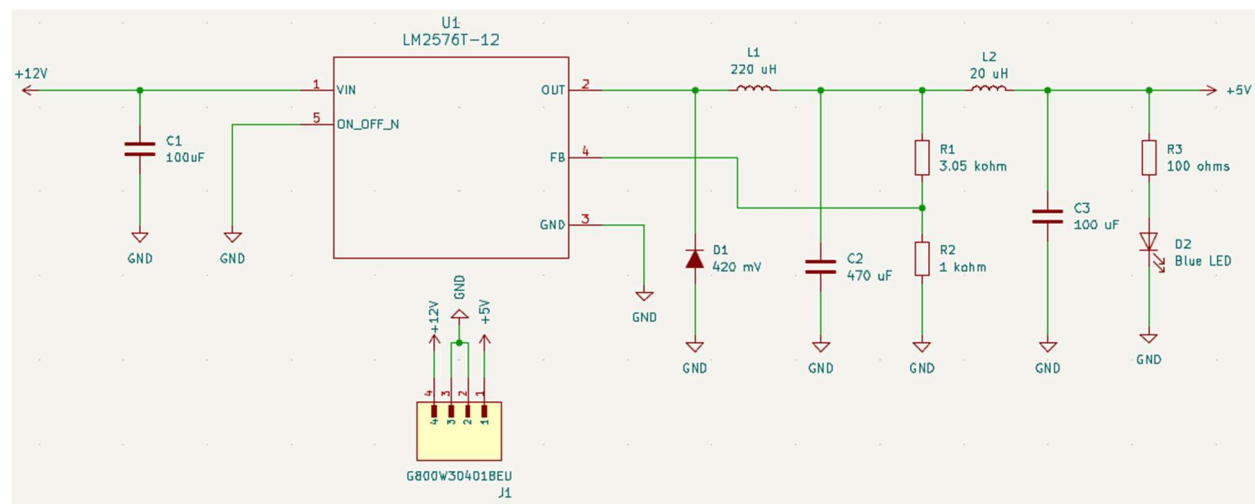


Figure 6.1.1 5 V Regulator Schematic with Male Pins for connection to main PCB board.

6.1.1.2 Voltage Regulator for Microcontroller

The 3.3 V regulator schematic was built based on the recommendations of the WEBENCH Power Designer given the requirements of a voltage input of 12 V, output voltage of 3.3 V, output current

of 1 A, and utilizes the LM2576T-ADJ component. However, a few adjustments were made to the recommended circuit to better match the needs of our system. The L2 and C3 electric components have been added to minimize the output voltage ripple as recommended by the datasheet for the LM2576T-ADJ component. Another adjustment made to the circuit was the addition of the Green LED to give an indication that the voltage regulator is working. The R3 resistor was added in series to the Blue LED to minimize the voltage and current going through the LED to ensure that the LED works as intended.

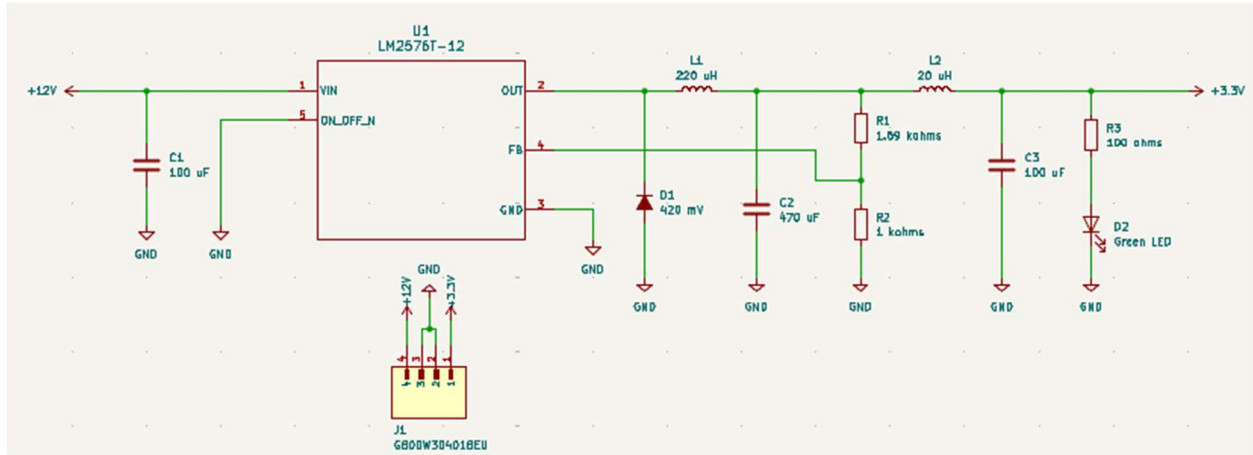


Figure 6.1.4 3.3 V Regulator Schematic with Male Pins for connection to main PCB board.

6.1.1.3 Load Switch for Laser Diode

Another component of our power delivery system is the load switch. The load switch will be utilized as a switch to turn on or off the light sources depending on the user's input. The schematic of the load switches was created based on the datasheet recommendation. The R4 and R3 values were chosen to be 10 kohms and 1 kohms respectively due to the datasheet operational values being based on the ideal conditions of R4 and R3 being 10 kohms and 1 kohms respectively. The C4 value were chosen to be 1 μ F for a voltage output rise time of between 1440 μ s and 1890 μ s.

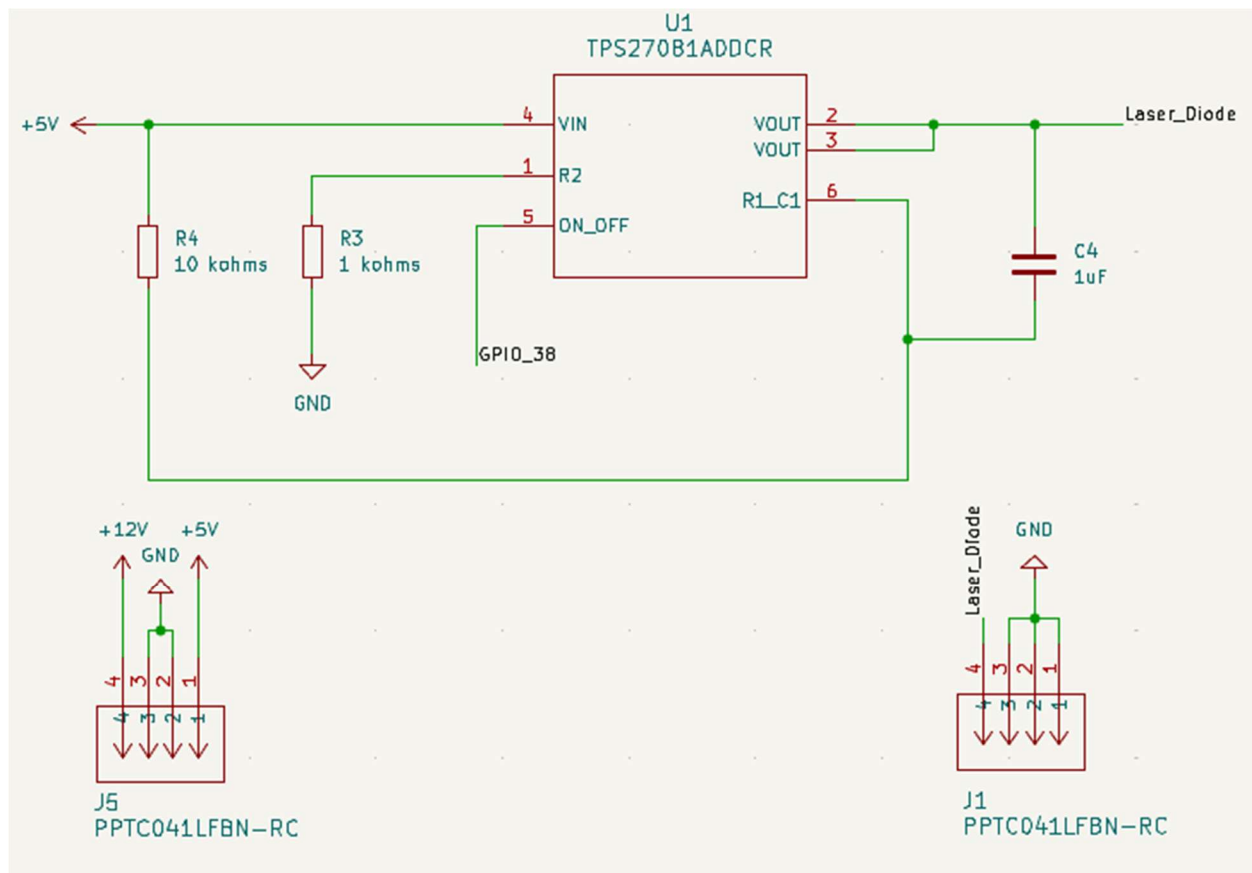


Figure 6.1.7 Load Switch Schematic for LED with Female Headers for connection to USB and Female Headers for 5 V Regulator to connect to the main PCB board.

6.1.1.3 LED Driver

The LED driver will be utilized on the main PCB board. The J3, J6, and J7 are utilized in the schematic to note where in the PCB board the wires of the LED driver will be soldered through the PCB board. The J8 notes the connection of the LED to the LED driver in which the wires of the LED will be soldered through the PCB board to receive power from the LED driver.

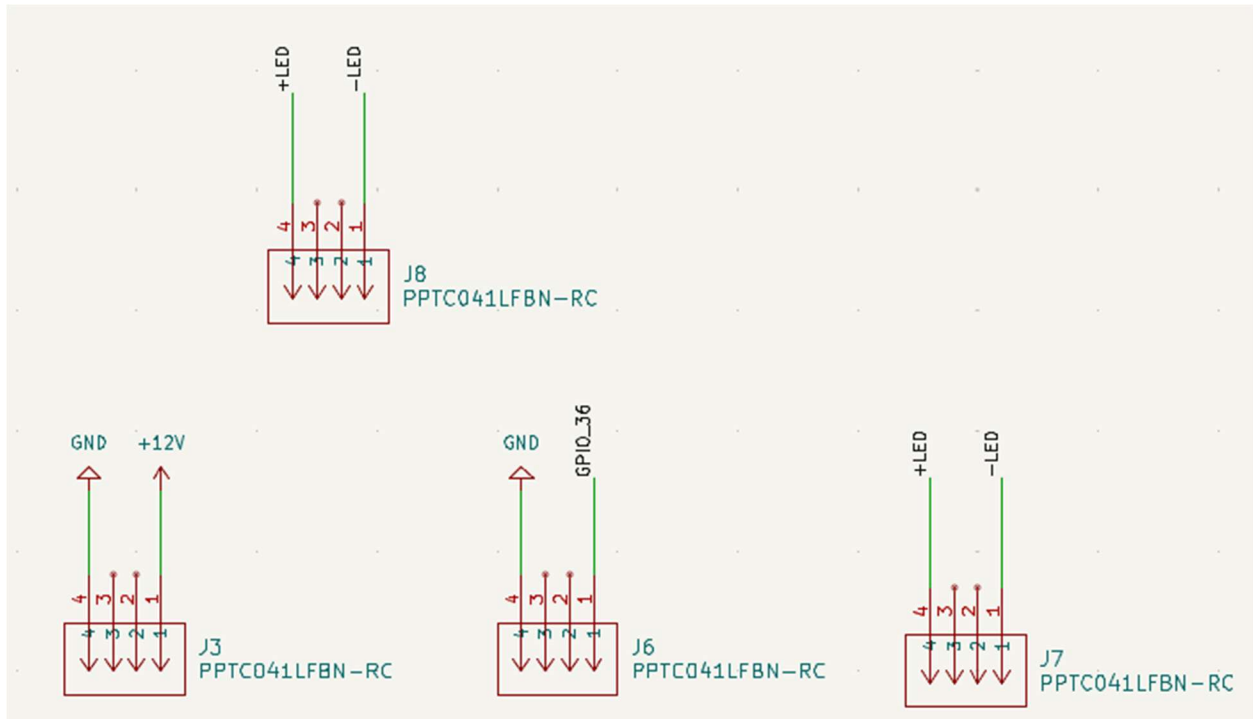


Figure 6.1.7 LED Driver connection to the main PCB board to power the LED.

6.1.2 Microcontroller Connection

6.1.2.1 Microcontroller Pins Configuration

For our prototype, an ESP32 development board will be utilized but for the PCB board, a ESP32-S3-WROOM-1 module will be implemented instead. The schematic was created based on the ESP32 development board schematic datasheet. The ESP32 development board can take 5 V due to having an internal voltage regulator that takes the 5 V to 3.3 V. Thus, for our PCB board, the ESP32 will be powered directly by the 3.3 V regulator through the 3.3 V pin on the ESP32. The ESP32 development board supports USB connection but a USB connection needs to be built onto our PCB board to flash the code onto the ESP32 microcontroller. Since the ESP32 is being powered by the 3.3 V regulator, the Vbus of the USB connection will be left to have no connection.

beam will go into the lens and be collimated. To find the beam diameter we find the diameter of our collimating lens for our LED. This is a 1-inch diameter lens which means our beam is going to be 1 inch. From the lens our beam is going to approach our mirror. This mirror has a diameter of 7mm which means our beam is now going to be 7mm.

To find the diameter of the Laser we use its divergence which is 0.6mrad. We use geometry and laser information to find the beam diameter and when it's greater than our mirror diameter since this is the smallest diameter optics we have. We know that the beam diameter is 3mm at 50mm distance. Using the formula $\tan(\theta) = \text{radius}/\text{length}$ we can find our beam diameter at any length from the laser diode. We first need to get our original beam diameter at the face of the laser. To find this we use $\tan(0.6\text{mrad}) = D/50\text{mm}$. This means our original beam divergence at 50mm is 0.00003m. If we subtract this from the diameter measured at this distance, we get our original distance $D_0 = 2.97\text{mm}$. Using this we can determine that to get to a diameter of 7mm the laser would have to travel 6.72m using the same method we used to find the diameter at 50mm. Since our beam will not travel anywhere near this distance, we will collect all this light into our detector.

6.1.3.2 Power Considerations

If our beam is collimated at 1 inch diameter from the lens and only 7mm gets reflected from the mirror we are losing 72.44% of power. This leads to our beam having a power of 320mW after the first mirror. The beam splitters will each introduce a 50% power loss per beam splitter. This leads to having a power of 40mW going into our detector which is enough to satisfy our 20mW goal.

For each laser the only power loss will be the 50% loss from each beam splitter. This leads to a power of 0.1125mW for the laser power measured by the detector. Since the laser has a noise equivalent power down to the 10^{-14} W we will easily be able to see this power.

Chapter 7: Software and Simulation Design

7.1 Control Software

Our project integrates multiple technologies into a unified graphical user interface (GUI) to enable robust data acquisition, control, and visualization. At the core, we use NI-DAQmx, a driver and API suite from National Instruments to interface with data acquisition hardware. This allows precise control over analog and digital I/O, timing, and triggering. We embed LabVIEW, a graphical programming environment, to handle real-time data visualization and user interaction. LabVIEW's modular design and seamless integration with NI-DAQmx make it ideal for building responsive measurement systems.

For low-level hardware control and custom logic, we use C programming, particularly for performance-critical routines and direct communication with embedded systems. Additionally, we incorporate Arduino microcontrollers programmed in the Arduino IDE (based on C/C++) to

manage peripheral sensors and actuators. These devices communicate with the main system via serial protocols, allowing flexible expansion and distributed control.

All components LabVIEW, NI-DAQmx, C modules, and Arduino firmware are embedded into a single GUI framework. This unified interface streamlines user interaction, consolidates data streams, and provides centralized control over the entire system. The result is a cohesive, multi-platform solution that bridges high-level visualization with low-level hardware control.

7.2 Simulation Design

7.2.3 MATLAB

MATLAB is an environment that is well suited to the task of simulating polarization experiments allowing us to work with stokes parameters easily by employing toolkits. MATLAB's matrix-oriented architecture and visualization tools allow for easily implementing Jones's calculus. The native syntax makes it easy to perform the calculations intuitively by representing light using Jones vectors and modeling optical components like polarizers and wave plates using matrices. Then simulate the effects of these components through matrix multiplication. Visualizing the results with built in tools to plot polarization as well as changes in power by function of changing the rotation of the crystal.

The addition of toolboxes and community contributed libraries that provide functions for computing the polarization parameters such as degree of polarization and the components for the Poincare sphere. These resources streamline the simulation process and ensure consistency with established models. MATLAB's integration with experimental hardware via serial communication and data acquisition toolboxes allows you to compare simulated results directly with live measurements, making it a platform for modeling and validation. With clear reusable code that allows for adapting our experimental setups for adjustments to different types of crystal or various powers and frequencies of light.

7.2.2 Mathematical Principles

The mathematical principals behind the polarization control using the z – cut quartz can be determined when assuming a monochromatic and collimated beam. The change in phase delay $\Delta\phi(\theta)$ as a function of rotation angle is written as

$$\Delta\phi(\theta) = 2\pi \frac{\Gamma(\theta)}{\lambda} = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} n_o d \left(\sqrt{1 - \frac{\sin^2 \theta}{n_e^2}} - \sqrt{1 - \frac{\sin^2 \theta}{n_o^2}} \right) \quad (1)$$

Here λ is the wavelength d is the thickness of the quartz plate and n_o , n_e are the refractive indices for the ordinary and extraordinary components. Where the Jones Matrix of the Rotating z – cut quartz is shown to be

$$\mathbf{Q}(\beta, \theta) = \begin{pmatrix} Q_{xx} & Q_{xy} \\ Q_{yx} & Q_{yy} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos^2 \beta + e^{i\Delta\phi} \sin^2 \beta & (1 - e^{i\Delta\phi}) \sin \beta \cos \beta \\ (1 - e^{i\Delta\phi}) \sin \beta \cos \beta & \sin^2 \beta + e^{i\Delta\phi} \cos^2 \beta \end{pmatrix} \quad (2)$$

Here β is the angle of pitch applied to the crystal by how the rotator is mounted, if $\beta = 0, \pi/2$, Parallel or orthogonal to the optical axis, the $\mathbf{P}$ and $\mathbf{S}$ polarizations will not experience rotation due to $\mathbf{Q}$ becoming a diagonal matrix. These positions of the mounted crystal will not function as a waveplate, to ensure those off diagonal components having a value for β of $\pi/4$ can be achieved by applying a 45° pitch to the rotator mount.

Using the Jones matrix, we can solve the electric field of the incident beam for single and double pass configurations. Those expressions are

$$\mathbf{E}^{(S)} = \begin{pmatrix} E_x^{(S)} \\ E_y^{(S)} \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{Q} \left(\frac{\pi}{4}, \theta \right) \cdot \mathbf{E}_i = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 - e^{i\Delta\Phi} \\ 1 + e^{i\Delta\Phi} \end{pmatrix} \quad (3)$$

$$\mathbf{E}^{(D)} = \begin{pmatrix} E_x^{(D)} \\ E_y^{(D)} \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{Q} \left(-\frac{\pi}{4}, \theta \right) \cdot \mathbf{M} \cdot \mathbf{E}^{(S)} = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 - e^{i2\Delta\Phi} \\ -(1 + e^{i2\Delta\Phi}) \end{pmatrix} \quad (4)$$

Here $\mathbf{M}$ is the Jones matrix for a mirror under normal incident light and $\mathbf{Q} \left(-\frac{\pi}{4}, \theta \right)$ is the matrix representing the retro – reflected light. Implementation of a polarizing beam splitter (PBS) allowed them to vary the transmitted power this variance is given by $P_x^{(S)}, P_y^{(D)}$ for the single and double pass configurations respectively. These are

$$P_x^{(S)} = \left| E_x^{(S)} \right|^2 = \sin^2 (\Delta\phi/2) \quad (5),$$

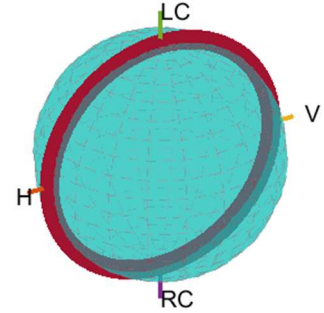
$$P_x^{(D)} = \left| E_x^{(D)} \right|^2 = \sin^2 (\Delta\phi) \quad (6)$$

7.2.2 Stokes' Theorem

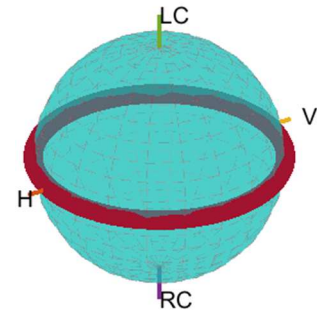
The mathematical theorem we employed to determine the output polarization state of our light was based on the Stokes' parameters. This method involves converting the E_x and E_y fields into parameters that allow us to map this field into a 3-Dimensional sphere, this sphere is called the Poincaré sphere. This sphere contains every possible polarization state where the parameters are defined by the electric fields and then converted to x, y, and z values. With an electric field defined as $\mathbf{E} = \begin{pmatrix} E_x \\ E_y \end{pmatrix}$, a jones vector is converted to stokes' parameters using the following formulas. $S_0 = |E_x|^2 + |E_y|^2$, $S_1 = |E_x|^2 - |E_y|^2$, $S_2 = 2 \cdot \text{Re}(E_x E_y^*)$, $S_3 = 2 \cdot \text{Im}(E_x E_y^*)$

After evaluating the Stokes' parameters namely S_0 , which defines the magnitude of intensity. S_1 , being the portion of the magnitude that is in the horizontal or vertical polarization direction, or x direction in the Poincaré space. S_2 corresponds to the portion of magnitude in the $\pm 45^\circ$ polarization or the y direction. Lastly the S_3 parameter represents the portion of the magnitude in the Left/Right-handed circular polarization or the z direction. The formulas used to convert the parameters to the x, y and z values are $x = \frac{S_1}{S_0}$, $y = \frac{S_2}{S_0}$, $z = \frac{S_3}{S_0}$. The Poincaré sphere that is created by these equations verifies the findings in our background paper. Showing an axis of transition that goes from our input state moving through circular polarizations eventually reaching the orthogonal target state. The plot that corresponds to the conditions that match the paper is represented in this figure. This figure corresponds to a total crystal rotation angle, of 10° , namely from $10^\circ - 20^\circ$. This rotation angle shows multiple rotations through the Poincaré space. This finding went against our initial interpretation of the paper. With our original assumption being that the transitional states would correspond to an axis that traveled through the $\pm 45^\circ$ axis of rotation to further verify the accuracy of our results by introducing a quarter-wave plate to the system, which should convert circular polarization states into 45° ones and vice versa. The results of that implementation are as follows. This result further verifies the accuracy of our simulation being supported by the current understanding of polarization modulation and allows us to move forward with confidence into the next part of the simulation, a broadband source, as well as accounting for optical losses due to the components within the system.

Poincare Sphere



Poincare Sphere

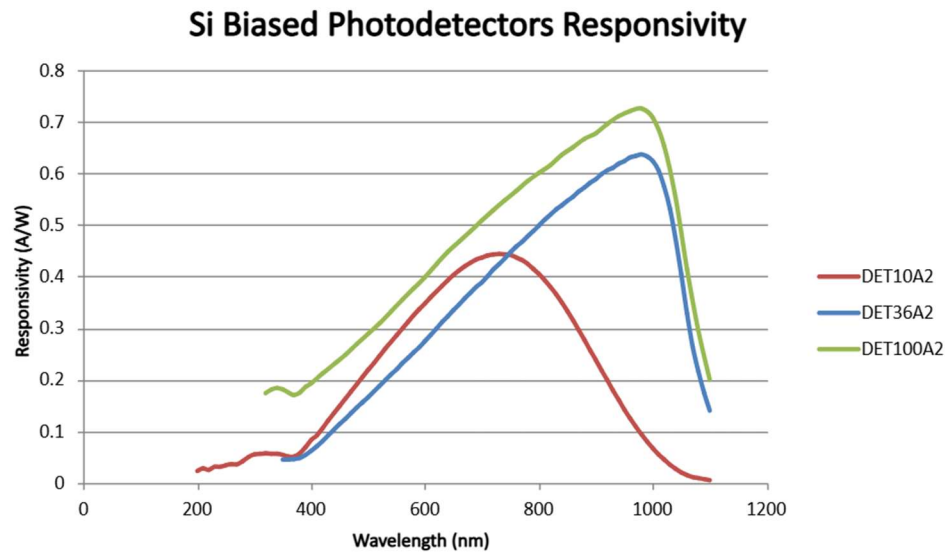


Chapter 9: System testing and Evaluation

9.1 Optoelectronics Feasibility

The Fast polarization switch project utilizes a photodiode as a way to measure the efficacy of our system. With a target 30 dB difference between the off and on states of our output power. The photodiode will be combined with an oscilloscope to offer an analog measurement of the output providing high enough fidelity of measurements to clearly see any vibrational effects and accurately compare the experimental results to the simulated results, the photo diode we are using is a biased Si detector from Thorlabs the DET100A2 with a detector size of 75.4 mm^2 , 35 ns Bandwidth of 10Mhz. Taking the output of our sources both the beam size and the overall optical losses due to the absorption and scattering cause by the optical components we can

simulate the intensity incident on the detector. The Responsivity graphs of the other comparable photo detectors from Thorlabs are shown here as well.



Chapter 10: Administrative Content

10.1 Budget

Our project was sponsored by ASML, and they therefore set limits on the design. One of these limits is our budget which they selected to be under \$7,500 and preferably below \$5,000. This budget encompasses every component that we may need including a light source and polarized beam splitter which are expensive items. This budget also encompasses any replacements we may need, including the PCB and other electronic parts that may be changed in the production of our project. A breakdown of expected costs and budget distribution is provided in the Bill of Materials section.

10.1.1 Bill of Materials

10.1.1.1 Thorlabs

Part Name	Part Number	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
BNC Cable	2249-C-36	1	\$ 21.23	\$ 21.23
Glan-Taylor	GT5	2	\$ 626.65	\$ 1253.30
Optical Post	MS1R/M	7	\$ 7.96	\$ 55.72
M3 Screw Kit	HW-KIT5/M	1	\$ 123.30	\$ 123.30
Post Holder	MSH075	7	\$ 39.10	\$ 273.70
LED Connector	CON8ML-4	1	\$ 39.10	\$ 39.10

Retroreflector	PS974M-A	1	\$ 205.91	\$ 205.91
Lens	ACL25416U	2	\$ 22.00	\$ 44.00
1/2 Wave Plate	LCC1111U-A	1	\$ 388.95	\$ 388.95
Beamplitter	CCM5-BS016/M	3	\$ 224.99	\$ 674.97
Post Clamp	PCM/M	1	\$ 48.63	\$ 48.63
Photo Detector	DET100A2	1	\$ 204.65	\$ 204.65
Mirror	BB03-E02	4	\$ 49.85	\$ 199.40
Mirror mount	MFM7/M	4	\$ 31.15	\$ 124.60
520 nm Laser	PL201	1	\$ 199.63	\$ 199.63
635 nm Laser	PL202	1	\$ 146.40	\$ 146.40
Galvo Cables	CBLS3F	1	\$ 105.72	\$ 105.72
Power Supply	GPWR15	1	\$ 600.27	\$ 600.27
Galvanometer	SS30Y-AG	1	\$ 3819.90	\$ 3819.90
LED	M470L5	1	\$ 261.20	\$ 261.20
Breadboard	MBY3030/M	1	\$ 369.15	\$ 369.15

10.1.1.2 Amazon

Part name	Part number	Quantity	Unit price	Total price
USB 2.0 Socket	B09WQHPXH6	1	\$ 5.89	\$ 5.89
ESP32-S3	B0BX2MSCRT	1	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
M8 Plug IP67	B0DGXB6PPQ	1	\$ 9.98	\$ 9.98

10.1.1.3 DigiKey

Part name	Part number	Quantity	Unit price	Total price
Breadboard	1738-1326-ND	1	\$ 2.90	\$ 2.90
IC REG 5V	497-1443-5-ND	1	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50
IC REG 8V	497-15581-5-ND	1	\$ 1.43	\$ 1.43
IC PWR Switch	296-34970-1-ND	1	\$ 0.77	\$ 0.77
AC/DC Adapter	L6R12H-120	1	\$ 9.48	\$ 9.48
DC Power Jack	2057-ADC-002-1-ND	1	\$ 0.33	\$ 0.33
22AWG Jumper Kit	BKWK-3-ND	1	\$ 5.60	\$ 5.60
DAQ DEVICE	2270-782606-01-ND	1	\$ 784.12	\$ 784.12

10.2 Milestones

Table 10.2.1 Senior Design 1 Milestones

Milestone	Start Date	End Date
D&C Report Submission	8/26/2025	9/5/2025
Committee Formation	9/2/2025	9/5/2025
D&C Meeting	9/8/2025	9/8/2025
Rough Draft Midterm	9/8/2025	10/3/2025
Midterm Report	9/8/2025	10/24/2025
Simulation Results	9/15/2025	10/24/2025
Compile and Submit	10/25/2025	10/30/2025
Mid Project Demo Component Acquisition	10/30/2025	11/18/2025
Final Report Draft	10/31/2025	11/18/2025
Sim Results	10/25/2025	11/18/2025
Compile and Submit Final	11/18/2025	11/25/2025
Mid Project Demo Assembly	11/18/2025	11/24/2025

Table 10.2.2 Senior design 2 Milestones

Milestone	Start Date	End Date
Acquisition of Final Components	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Program Software Control	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Build GUI to Control System	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Sim results for timing of the system	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Characterization of Polarization Switch	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Final adjustments to meet expectations	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Review and Adjust Report or Sim	TBD SD2	TBD SD2
Accomplish Stretch Goals	TBD SD2	TBD SD2

10.3 Work Distributions

Electrical Engineering	Responsibilities: Software	Hardware
Michelle Nguyen	- Initialize Motor Library - Initialize MCU pins to motor - Set motor speed - Function: Calculate time for motor to spin to reach calculated degree - Set motor spin time	- Power Supply - Microcontroller - Motor Driver - Motor

	• Break out of Switch Statement • Start motor • Stop motor	
Optical Engineering		
David “Austin” Rich	• Initialize MCU pins for laser diodes • If / Else Statement: Turn on/off laser diodes based on User Prompt • Read Power Measurement	• Laser Driver • Laser Diode 1 • Laser Diode 2 • Laser Diode 3 • Power Detector
Joshua Hendry	• GUI / User Prompt • Function: Calculate needed degree for selected polarization • Switch Statement: Case selection based on User Prompt (polarization selected) • Set motor angle • Display Power Measurement on GUI	• Laptop • Mirror • Retro-Mirror • Crystal

Appendix A: References

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Appendix B: Data Sheets and Reference Figures

Table 2. Comparison of the experimental and computed values of refractive index for the ordinary rays of calcite crystal

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
0.2040	1.88224	1.882184	0.000056	1.884897	-0.002657
0.2080	1.86733	1.866589	0.000741	1.868397	-0.001067
0.2110	1.85692	1.855997	0.000923	1.857550	-0.000630
0.2140	1.84558	1.846232	-0.000652	1.847669	-0.002089
0.2190	1.83075	1.831551	-0.000801	1.832931	-0.002181
0.2260	1.81309	1.813794	-0.000704	1.815199	-0.002109
0.2310	1.80233	1.802752	-0.000422	1.804197	-0.001867
0.2420	1.78211	1.782239	-0.000129	1.783761	-0.001651
0.2570	1.76038	1.760496	-0.000116	1.762065	-0.001685
0.2630	1.75343	1.753303	0.000127	1.754873	-0.001443
0.2670	1.74864	1.748894	-0.000254	1.750460	-0.001820
0.2740	1.74139	1.741830	-0.000440	1.743380	-0.001990
0.2910	1.72774	1.727493	0.000247	1.728974	-0.001234
0.3030	1.71959	1.719253	0.000337	1.720668	-0.001078
0.3120	1.71425	1.713869	0.000381	1.715229	-0.000979
0.3300	1.70515	1.704727	0.000423	1.705972	-0.000822
0.3400	1.70078	1.700410	0.000370	1.701590	-0.000810
0.3460	1.69833	1.698037	0.000293	1.699179	-0.000849
0.3610	1.69316	1.692717	0.000443	1.693764	-0.000604
0.3940	1.68374	1.683418	0.000322	1.684272	-0.000532
0.4100	1.68014	1.679808	0.000332	1.680578	-0.000438
0.4340	1.67552	1.675209	0.000311	1.675864	-0.000344
0.4410	1.67423	1.674022	0.000208	1.674645	-0.000415
0.5080	1.66527	1.665186	0.000084	1.665564	-0.000294
0.5330	1.66277	1.662745	0.000025	1.663052	-0.000282
0.5600	1.66046	1.660471	-0.000011	1.660711	-0.000251
0.5890	1.65835	1.658364	-0.000014	1.658543	-0.000193

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
0.6430	1.65504	1.655139	-0.000099	1.655229	-0.000189
0.6560	1.65437	1.654470	-0.000100	1.654542	-0.000172
0.6700	1.65367	1.653788	-0.000118	1.653842	-0.000172
0.7000	1.65207	1.652444	-0.000374	1.652465	-0.000395
0.7680	1.64974	1.649868	-0.000128	1.649834	-0.000094
0.7950	1.64886	1.648985	-0.000125	1.648935	-0.000075
0.8010	1.64869	1.648797	-0.000107	1.648745	-0.000055
0.8330	1.64772	1.647844	-0.000124	1.647778	-0.000058
0.8670	1.64676	1.646908	-0.000148	1.646831	-0.000071
0.9050	1.64578	1.645937	-0.000157	1.645852	-0.000072
0.9460	1.64480	1.644964	-0.000164	1.644874	-0.000074
0.9910	1.64380	1.643964	-0.000164	1.643873	-0.000073
1.0420	1.64276	1.642899	-0.000139	1.642812	-0.000052
1.0970	1.64167	1.641811	-0.000141	1.641732	-0.000062
1.1590	1.64051	1.640638	-0.000128	1.640572	-0.000062
1.2290	1.63926	1.639359	-0.000099	1.639311	-0.000051
1.2730	1.63849	1.638570	-0.000080	1.638535	-0.000045
1.3070	1.63789	1.637965	-0.000075	1.637940	-0.000050
1.3200	1.63767	1.637734	-0.000064	1.637714	-0.000044
1.3690	1.63681	1.636866	-0.000056	1.636862	-0.000052
1.3960	1.63637	1.636388	-0.000018	1.636392	-0.000022
1.4220	1.63590	1.635926	-0.000026	1.635939	-0.000039
1.4790	1.63490	1.634910	-0.000010	1.634940	-0.000040
1.4970	1.63457	1.634587	-0.000017	1.634623	-0.000053
1.5410	1.63381	1.633793	0.000017	1.633841	-0.000031
1.6090	1.63261	1.632548	0.000062	1.632614	-0.000004
1.6820	1.63127	1.631183	0.000087	1.631263	0.000007
1.7610	1.62974	1.629666	0.000074	1.629756	-0.000016
1.8490	1.62800	1.627922	0.000078	1.628012	-0.000012
1.9460	1.62602	1.625924	0.000096	1.626000	0.000020
2.0530	1.62372	1.623621	0.000099	1.623659	0.000061

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
2.1720	1.62099	1.620926	0.000064	1.620888	0.000102
			RMSD=0.0003		RMSD=0.0009

Table 3. Comparison of the experimental and computed values of refractive index for the extraordinary rays of calcite crystal

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
0.2040	1.57081	1.570667	0.000143	1.571153	-0.000343
0.2080	1.56640	1.566086	0.000314	1.566326	0.000074
0.2110	1.56327	1.562883	0.000387	1.562984	0.000286
0.2140	1.55976	1.559863	-0.000103	1.559855	-0.000095
0.2190	1.55496	1.555197	-0.000237	1.555060	-0.000100
0.2260	1.54921	1.549340	-0.000130	1.549099	0.000111
0.2310	1.54541	1.545575	-0.000165	1.545298	0.000112
0.2420	1.53782	1.538317	-0.000497	1.538024	-0.000204
0.2570	1.53005	1.530226	-0.000176	1.529982	0.000068
0.2630	1.52736	1.527455	-0.000095	1.527240	0.000120
0.2670	1.52547	1.525733	-0.000263	1.525538	-0.000068
0.2740	1.52261	1.522933	-0.000323	1.522775	-0.000165
0.2910	1.51705	1.517101	-0.000051	1.517029	0.000021
0.3030	1.51365	1.513654	-0.000004	1.513638	0.000012
0.3120	1.51140	1.511364	0.000036	1.511386	0.000014
0.3300	1.50746	1.507405	0.000055	1.507492	-0.000032
0.3400	1.50562	1.505505	0.000115	1.505623	-0.000003
0.3460	1.50450	1.504452	0.000048	1.504587	-0.000087
0.3610	1.50224	1.502071	0.000169	1.502242	-0.000002
0.3940	1.49810	1.497838	0.000262	1.498069	0.000031
0.4100	1.49640	1.496173	0.000227	1.496425	-0.000025
0.4340	1.49430	1.494035	0.000265	1.494310	-0.000010
0.4410	1.49373	1.493481	0.000249	1.493762	-0.000032
0.5080	1.48956	1.489333	0.000227	1.489643	-0.000083
0.5330	1.48841	1.488186	0.000224	1.488499	-0.000089

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
0.5600	1.48736	1.487121	0.000239	1.487433	-0.000073
0.5890	1.48640	1.486139	0.000261	1.486449	-0.000049
0.6430	1.48490	1.484658	0.000242	1.484955	-0.000055
0.6560	1.48459	1.484355	0.000235	1.484648	-0.000058
0.6700	1.48426	1.484049	0.000211	1.484336	-0.000076
0.7000	1.48353	1.483452	0.000078	1.483728	-0.000198
0.7680	1.48259	1.482345	0.000245	1.482589	0.000001
0.7950	1.48216	1.481980	0.000180	1.482209	-0.000049
0.8010	1.48216	1.481904	0.000256	1.482129	0.000031
0.8330	1.48176	1.481522	0.000238	1.481729	0.000031
0.8670	1.48137	1.481159	0.000211	1.481345	0.000025
0.9050	1.48098	1.480798	0.000182	1.480958	0.000022
0.9460	1.48060	1.480451	0.000149	1.480582	0.000018
0.9910	1.48022	1.480114	0.000106	1.480211	0.000009
1.0420	1.47985	1.479776	0.000074	1.479832	0.000018
1.0970	1.47948	1.479455	0.000025	1.479463	0.000017
1.1590	1.47910	1.479135	-0.000035	1.479087	0.000013
1.2290	1.47870	1.478817	-0.000117	1.478700	0.000000
1.3070	1.47831	1.478503	-0.000193	1.478305	0.000005
1.3960	1.47789	1.478185	-0.000295	1.477887	0.000003
1.4970	1.47744	1.477861	-0.000421	1.477441	-0.000001
1.6150	1.47695	1.477516	-0.000566	1.476942	0.000008
1.7490	1.47638	1.477155	-0.000775	1.476389	-0.000009
1.9090	1.47573	1.476745	-0.001015	1.475729	0.000001
2.1000	1.47492	1.476269	-0.001349	1.474921	-0.000001
3.3240	1.47392	1.472766	0.001154	1.468373	0.005547
			RMSD=0.0004	RMSD=0.0008	

Table 4. Comparison of the experimental and computed values of refractive index for the ordinary rays of quartz crystal

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
0.1980	1.65087	1.650902	-0.000032	1.652553	-0.001683
0.2310	1.61395	1.613860	0.000090	1.614267	-0.000317
0.3400	1.56747	1.567554	-0.000084	1.567528	-0.000058
0.3940	1.55846	1.558504	-0.000044	1.558488	-0.000028
0.4340	1.55396	1.553960	0.000000	1.553956	0.000004
0.5080	1.54822	1.548240	-0.000020	1.548257	-0.000037
0.5893	1.54424	1.544206	0.000034	1.544238	0.000002
0.7680	1.53903	1.538998	0.000032	1.539048	-0.000018
0.8325	1.53773	1.537711	0.000019	1.537763	-0.000033
0.9914	1.53514	1.535126	0.000014	1.535179	-0.000039
1.1592	1.53283	1.532823	0.000007	1.532872	-0.000042
1.3070	1.53090	1.530905	-0.000005	1.530949	-0.000049
1.3958	1.52977	1.529752	0.000018	1.529792	-0.000022
1.4792	1.52865	1.528651	-0.000001	1.528687	-0.000037
1.5414	1.52781	1.527813	-0.000003	1.527846	-0.000036
1.6815	1.52583	1.525857	-0.000027	1.525883	-0.000053
1.7614	1.52468	1.524690	-0.000010	1.524712	-0.000032
1.9457	1.52184	1.521832	0.000008	1.521845	-0.000005
2.0531	1.52005	1.520048	0.000002	1.520056	-0.000006
			RMSD=0.0003		RMSD=0.0004

Table 5. Comparison of the experimental and computed values of refractive index for the extraordinary rays of quartz crystal

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
	Experimental [1]	This work			
Empty Cell			Empty Cell	Empty Cell	Empty Cell
0.1980	1.66394	1.663972	-0.000032	1.665774	-0.001834
0.2310	1.62555	1.625459	0.000091	1.625948	-0.000398
0.3400	1.57737	1.577457	-0.000087	1.577594	-0.000224
0.3940	1.56805	1.568093	-0.000043	1.568306	-0.000256
0.4340	1.56339	1.563393	-0.000003	1.563673	-0.000283
0.5080	1.55746	1.557478	-0.000018	1.557888	-0.000428
0.5893	1.55335	1.553306	0.000044	1.553871	-0.000521

Wavelength (μm)	Refractive index		Difference	R.I. (calculated) [2]	Difference
Empty Cell	Experimental [1]	This work	Empty Cell	Empty Cell	Empty Cell
0.7680	1.54794	1.547917	0.000023	1.548871	-0.000931
0.8325	1.54661	1.546583	0.000027	1.547698	-0.001088
0.9914	1.54392	1.543901	0.000019	1.545459	-0.001539
1.1592	1.54152	1.541508	0.000012	1.543614	-0.002094
1.3070	1.53951	1.539513	-0.000003	1.542172	-0.002662
1.3958	1.53832	1.538312	0.000008	1.541337	-0.003017
1.4792	1.53716	1.537166	-0.000006	1.540556	-0.003396
1.5414	1.53630	1.536292	0.000008	1.539970	-0.003670
1.6815	1.53422	1.534253	-0.000033	1.538623	-0.004403
1.7614	1.53301	1.533036	-0.000026	1.537831	-0.004821
1.9457	1.53004	1.530055	-0.000015	1.535911	-0.005871
2.0531	1.52823	1.528194	0.000036	1.534722	-0.006492
			RMSD=0.00004		RMSD=0.003

(Ghosh 1999)

Appendix C: LLM Prompts and Responses

[1a] Case Study 1 Prompt: “average stepper motor cost”

[1b] Case Study 1 Google Gemini Outcome: “The cost of a stepper motor can range significantly, typically from **\$5 to over \$1,500** per unit, but most common motors for hobbyists and light industrial use fall between **\$10 and \$200**.”

The wide price range is due to several key factors, primarily **size (NEMA standard), torque, speed, and additional features** like integrated drivers or encoders.

Typical Price Ranges by NEMA Size and Application

Stepper motors are often categorized by their **NEMA frame size**, which indicates the mounting face dimensions in inches (e.g., NEMA 17 has a 1.7" x 1.7" face). Generally, a larger NEMA size corresponds to higher torque and a higher price.

NEMA Frame Size	Typical Price Range (USD)	Common Applications
NEMA 8 to NEMA 14	\$5 - \$40	Small devices, precise optics, light-duty linear actuators, small 3D printers.
NEMA 17	\$10 - \$50	The most common size for 3D printers, CNC routers (desktop/small), and general hobby robotics .
NEMA 23	\$20 - \$150	Medium-duty CNC machines, larger 3D printers, industrial automation equipment requiring more power.
NEMA 34 and larger	\$50 - \$1,500+	Heavy-duty industrial CNC machinery, high-power robotic systems , and demanding motion control applications.

Factors Influencing Stepper Motor Cost

- **Holding Torque:** This is the most significant factor. Motors with **higher holding torque** (more powerful) require larger magnets and more robust construction, leading to a higher cost.

- **Integrated Electronics:** Motors with a built-in **driver** or **closed-loop encoder** system (sometimes called *servo-stepper* or *easy-servo*) are significantly more expensive, often ranging from **\$80 to over \$600**. These provide higher precision and prevent missed steps.
- **Precision (Step Angle):** Motors with a smaller step angle (e.g., 0.9° instead of the standard 1.8°) offer better positional resolution and are typically more expensive.
- **Gearing:** Motors with an integrated **planetary gearbox** increase torque and precision but also increase the cost, sometimes by two to five times the price of the motor alone.
- **Brand and Quality:** Industrial-grade motors from reputable brands (e.g., Applied Motion, Oriental Motor) designed for continuous, high-reliability operation in harsh environments are far more costly than generic, mass-produced motors often sold on consumer marketplaces.”

[2a] Case Study 2 Prompt: “average servo motor cost”

[2b] Case Study 2 Google Gemini Outcome: “The cost of a servo motor can vary dramatically, ranging from a few dollars for small hobbyist motors to several thousand dollars for high-precision industrial units.

Here is a breakdown of typical price ranges based on the type and application:

Servo Motor Type	Typical Price Range	Key Characteristics
Hobby/Micro Servos	\$5 to \$50	Small, low-power motors often used in RC cars, planes, and basic robotics.
DC Servo Motors	\$100 to \$500	Generally brushed, known for high torque at lower speeds, sometimes requiring separate encoders.
AC Servo Motors	\$200 to \$2,000+	More common in industrial applications, generally more efficient and higher power. Price depends heavily on power and torque ratings.
Brushless DC (BLDC) Servo Motors	\$150 to \$5,000+	Used for high-precision applications like advanced robotics and aerospace. Known for long life and high efficiency.
High-End Industrial Servo Systems	\$1,000 to \$8,000+	High-power motors (e.g., 1 kW to 7.5 kW with high torque, often from major brands like Fanuc, Siemens, or Yaskawa. Prices can go significantly higher for

		specialized direct-drive or extremely high-power units.
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Key Factors that Influence Servo Motor Cost:

- **Torque and Power:** Higher torque (measured in Newton-meters, or Nm) and higher power ratings (measured in Watts or kW) directly increase the cost.
- **Precision/Resolution:** Motors with high-quality encoders or resolvers for precise positioning are generally more expensive.
- **Brand and Quality:** Reputable industrial brands often command higher prices due to their established quality, support, and advanced features.
- **Type:** As shown above, the fundamental design (DC, AC, BLDC, Direct Drive) is a primary cost driver.
- **Control System/Drive:** The total system cost includes the motor's dedicated drive unit or controller, which can add another **\$100 to \$5,000+** depending on its complexity (e.g., simple controllers vs. advanced multi-axis CNC controls)."

[3a] Case Study 3 Prompt: "DC Brushless Servo Motor average cost range"

[3b] Case Study 3 Google Gemini Outcome: "The cost of DC Brushless Servo Motors (BLDC servo motors) can vary significantly based on factors like power, torque, integrated features (like a driver/controller and encoder), and intended application (hobby, industrial, or specialized robotics).¹

Based on current market data, here is a general average cost range:

- **Entry-Level / Small Motors (e.g., hobby, low power/torque):**
 - Motors alone can start from as low as **\$15 to \$50** for very small units or basic BLDC motors used in some servo applications.
 - Small motor and driver kits typically range from **\$90 to \$250**.
- **Mid-Range / Industrial Motors (Standard Power, NEMA 23/34 sizes):**
 - Individual industrial-grade motors (e.g., 50W to 1000W) often fall between **\$150 and \$700**.
 - Motor and driver kits for this range are often found between **\$200 and \$1,000**.
- **High-End / High-Power / Specialized Motors (e.g., high torque, integrated harmonic drive, advanced industrial):**
 - High-power units (1kW and up) or motors with specialized gearing/high-resolution absolute encoders can range from **\$1,000 to over \$5,000**, with highly specialized robotic actuators reaching **\$7,000 or more**.

A comprehensive price range for **most BLDC Servo Motors** is approximately **\$150 to \$5,000**.²

Key Factors Influencing Cost:

1. **Power and Torque:** Higher power (Watts or Horsepower) and higher rated torque motors are significantly more expensive.³
2. **Encoder Type:** Motors with high-resolution **absolute encoders** are typically more costly than those with **incremental encoders**.
3. **Integration:** A **motor and driver/controller kit** is often more expensive than the motor alone. Some motors are highly integrated with reduction gearboxes (like harmonic drives) which drives the price up considerably.
4. **Brand and Quality:** Well-known industrial brands (e.g., Yaskawa, Kollmorgen, Parker) often have higher prices than motors from generic or specialized component suppliers.
5. **Application:** Motors designed for high-precision, heavy-duty industrial automation or aerospace are priced much higher than those for general-purpose DIY or light automation.”

[4a] Case Study 4 Prompt: “galvanometer motor average cost range”

[4b] Case Study 4 Google Gemini Outcome: “The average cost of **galvanometer motors** (often sold as part of a **galvanometer scanning head** or **galvo system**) can range broadly, typically falling between a few hundred to tens of thousands of dollars, depending heavily on the component type, performance, and application.¹

Typical Cost Range Breakdown

Component/System	Estimated Cost Range (USD)	Key Factors Affecting Price
Basic Galvo Motor/Single Axis Scanner	\$50 - \$600	Low-speed, smaller aperture (e.g., 5mm), often used for laser light shows or hobby-level marking.
High-Speed 2D Galvo Scanner Head (Pair of Motors + Drivers)	\$300 - \$4,500	Aperture size (e.g., 10mm), speed/precision (kpps rating), brand, and whether it includes a full driver board and optics.
Industrial/High-Performance 2D Galvo Scanner Head	\$3,500 - \$10,000+	High-precision, large aperture (e.g., 15mm+), premium brands, and specialized coatings for high-power lasers (e.g., CO2, Fiber).

3-Axis Dynamic Focusing Galvo System (Full Laser Scan Head)	\$12,000 - \$55,000+	Advanced systems used for large-area marking, 3D printing, or high-power industrial applications, including complex optics and advanced controls.
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Factors Influencing Galvanometer Motor Cost

The price variation is significant because a "galvanometer motor" can refer to a small, single component or an entire, highly sophisticated scanning system. Key factors include:

- **Axis Configuration:**
 - **Single-axis** systems are cheaper as they only require one motor and mirror.
 - **Dual-axis (2D)** scanner heads use a pair of motors/mirrors (X and Y) and a combined driver system, which is the most common configuration for laser marking and engraving.
 - **3-axis** systems add dynamic focusing (Z-axis control) for marking on curved surfaces or over a large area, making them the most expensive component-wise.
- **Performance (Speed and Precision):**
 - **High-Speed/High-Precision:** Galvanometers with fast step response times and high positioning repeatability (often rated in **kilopoints per second or kpps**) are significantly more expensive, as they require superior motor quality and control electronics.
- **Aperture Size:** This refers to the diameter of the mirror and the beam it can handle (e.g., 5mm, 10mm, 15mm). Larger apertures typically handle higher-power lasers and cost more due to the precision required for larger components.
- **Application/Source:** Systems optimized for different laser wavelengths (e.g., 1065 nm, 355 nm) require specific mirror coatings, impacting the price.
- **Brand and Build Quality:** Premium, industrial-grade manufacturers (e.g., SCANLAB, Raylase, Cambridge Technology) charge higher prices for guaranteed long-term stability, higher resolution, and superior performance compared to mass-market or generic brands.”

[5a] Case Study 5 Prompt: “galvanometer motor, using computer as the controller”

[5b] Case Study 5 Google Gemini Outcome: “A **galvanometer motor** (often called a **galvo scanner** or **galvo motor**) is an oscillating motor, distinct from a typical rotating motor, that is used to rapidly and precisely deflect a laser beam in applications like laser marking, cutting, and welding.

The **computer** acts as the **high-level controller** in a galvanometer motor system.

How the Computer Controls the Galvo Motor

1. **Software Interface:** The process begins with **marking software** or other control applications installed on a host computer. This software allows a user to design the pattern, text, or graphic to be processed by the laser.
2. **Data Processing:** The computer's software processes this design into a large amount of digital **marking data**, including trajectory and laser power information.
3. **Dedicated Controller/Interface Card:** The computer's digital commands are sent to a dedicated **galvo controller card** (sometimes called a laser marking card or digital servo board). This card is crucial for real-time control.
 - The industry-standard **XY2-100 protocol** is often used for communication between the computer's system and the galvo controller.
4. **Signal Conversion and Amplification:** The controller card contains a **Digital-to-Analog Converter (DAC)** to convert the digital position commands into analog voltage signals, which are then amplified by **servo amplifiers**.
5. **Motor Control:** These amplified analog signals are sent to the two galvanometer motors (one for the **X-axis** and one for the **Y-axis**), causing them to rotate their mounted mirrors.
6. **Closed-Loop Feedback:** Modern galvanometer systems are typically **closed-loop**. They use integrated **position sensors** (like optical encoders or capacitive sensors) on the motor axis to continuously measure the mirror's actual angular position. This position data is fed back to the controller, which compares it to the commanded position and makes real-time adjustments to the current, ensuring high precision, accuracy, and quick settling times.

Essentially, the **computer** defines the "what" and "where" of the pattern, and the **galvo controller** handles the "how" by translating those commands into the high-speed, precise electrical signals needed to drive the galvo motors.

The video below explains the inner workings of a closed-loop laser galvanometer. [Inside the Closed Loop Laser Beam Steering Galvanometer](#)

[6a] Case Study 6 Prompt: “galvanometer motor, using microcontroller as the controller”

[6b] Case Study 6 Google Gemini Outcome: “A **microcontroller** (MCU) can be used as the controller for a galvanometer motor system, particularly in **DIY, research, and lower-speed** applications. However, it requires a specific interface circuit because the MCU's digital output cannot directly drive the analog, high-speed galvo motors.

Microcontroller Galvo Control Architecture

The MCU serves as the **digital brain** that calculates the necessary coordinates and controls the peripheral hardware that interfaces with the galvos.

Component	Function	Detail
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Microcontroller (MCU)	Digital Command Generation	Executes the control logic (e.g., drawing a circle or square). It sends position data (digital values) and laser on/off commands. Common MCUs include Arduino , Teensy , or STM32 boards.
External DAC Chip	Digital-to-Analog Conversion	Converts the MCU's digital position values into an analog voltage signal . This is critical because galvo drivers require a smooth, continuous analog voltage (± 10 V is common) to command the mirror's angle. Integrated MCU DACs are often too slow or low-resolution.
Driver Circuit/Servo Amplifier	Signal Conditioning & Power	This is the actual motor controller. It takes the low-voltage analog signal from the DAC and: 1. Amplifies it to the required power and voltage levels (e.g., ± 10 V and high current). 2. Drives the motor coils to achieve the commanded angle. 3. Processes the position feedback from the galvo's internal sensor to maintain closed-loop control.
Galvanometer Motors	Mechanical Movement	Two galvo motors (X and Y) with mirrors mounted on them rapidly deflect the laser beam to trace the pattern.

Key Considerations for MCU Control

- **Speed and Resolution:** Commercial laser marking systems require very high speeds (up to 60k points per second or kpps) and high resolution (16-bit DACs), which can strain the data rate of typical hobbyist MCUs. Faster MCUs like the **Teensy** are often preferred for smoother, higher-speed projects.
- **External DAC:** An **external Digital-to-Analog Converter (DAC)** is almost always required. A popular choice is a dual-channel, 12-bit or 16-bit DAC (like the **MCP4822**) to handle the X and Y axes.
- **Analog Signal Requirement:** The galvanometer driver typically expects a **bipolar analog signal** (e.g., -5V to +5V or -10V to +10V). Since most MCUs output a **unipolar digital signal** (e.g., 0V to 3.3V or 0V to 5V), the circuit design must include op-amps and an appropriate power supply to create the required negative voltage and scale the signal range.

For more on DIY galvo control, see how one person achieved it using an Arduino.

[Arduino Laser Show With Real Galvos](#)

This video provides a practical, step-by-step guide for using an Arduino and an external DAC to create a functional galvanometer control system for a laser show.”

[7a] **Case Study 7 Prompt:** “average cost galvo controller card”

[7b] Case Study 7 Google Gemini Outcome: “The cost of a galvanometer (galvo) controller card varies widely depending on its **intended application, performance level, and whether it's an integrated industrial solution or a hobbyist component.**

Here is a general breakdown of the price ranges you can expect:

Price Range	Application & Performance Level	Examples
Budget/Hobbyist	Low-speed laser show or DIY projects. Often simple driver boards for the galvo motor itself, or specialized low-end program boards.	\$40 to \$200 USD
Industrial / Commercial (Mid-Range)	Dedicated laser marking/engraving machine control boards (often referred to as "Galvo Controllers" or "Control Cards" like JCZ/EZCAD). These are high-speed digital controllers that interface between a PC and the galvo driver/laser.	\$300 to \$750 USD
High-Performance / Scientific	High-end industrial, medical, or scientific scanning systems. These are typically part of a larger, complete galvo scan head system and offer extremely high speed, resolution (18-20+ bit), and complex firmware for precision work.	\$1,000 to over \$10,000 USD (often sold as a complete system with the galvos)

Key Takeaways:

- **Industrial Control Card (EZCAD/JCZ Type):** For most commercial laser marking machines, the dedicated control card that handles the job file and interfaces with the galvo drivers (often referred to as an "EZCAD" or similar board) typically costs in the **\$300 - \$750 USD** range.”
- **Hobbyist Components:** If you are building a system using a microcontroller (like an Arduino) and only need the basic **driver board** (servo amplifier) for a pair of galvos, the total cost for the control electronics is often much lower, but this path requires more DIY integration and coding.
- **Complete Scan Heads:** High-performance galvo systems are often sold as a **complete scan head** (galvo motors, mirrors, and drivers) with a dedicated controller, which can cost thousands of dollars.

[8a] Case Study 8 Prompt: “average cost of microcontroller”

[8b] Case Study 8 Google Gemini Outcome: “The average cost of a microcontroller can vary dramatically, ranging from under **\$1 to tens or even hundreds of dollars**, depending heavily on the type, quantity purchased, and features.

Here is a breakdown of typical costs:

- **Low-Cost/Volume Pricing (The Chip Itself):**¹
 - Basic 8-bit microcontrollers (MCUs) can be priced as low as **\$0.03 to under \$0.50 per unit** when purchased in high industrial quantities (e.g., thousands of units).²
 - More capable 32-bit MCUs can be found for around **\$0.50 to \$1.00 per unit** in high volumes.
 - These prices are for the microcontroller chip *itself* and are typical for large-scale manufacturing.
- **Hobbyist/Small Quantity Pricing (The Chip Itself):**
 - When buying single units or small quantities (e.g., from distributors like DigiKey or Mouser), simple MCUs often cost between **\$0.50 and \$5.00** each.
- **Development Boards (For Hobbyists and Engineers):**
 - Many microcontrollers are purchased as part of a **development board** which includes the MCU chip, a USB interface, voltage regulators, and other components to make it easy to program and use. These are significantly more expensive than the chip alone.
 - Popular boards like the **Raspberry Pi Pico** can be around **\$4 to \$6** (or slightly more for the wireless version).³
 - **Arduino Uno** or similar beginner-friendly boards often range from **\$20 to \$35** or more.
 - Higher-performance or specialized development boards (e.g., those with powerful CPUs, built-in large screens, or advanced communication modules) can cost **\$50 to over \$100**.

Key factors that influence the cost include:

1. **Bit Size (Architecture):** 8-bit MCUs (e.g., older AVR, PIC) are generally the cheapest, while 16-bit and 32-bit MCUs (e.g., ARM Cortex-M series) are more powerful and typically cost more.⁴
2. **Quantity:** The price per unit drops dramatically when ordering in large reels or trays for manufacturing compared to buying single chips.
3. **Features:** MCUs with more memory (Flash/RAM), faster clock speeds, advanced peripherals (like built-in Ethernet, Wi-Fi/Bluetooth, higher-precision ADCs), or those

designed for specialized markets (like automotive or high-reliability industrial) will cost more.

4. **Supply Chain:** Global semiconductor shortages or demand spikes can temporarily increase prices.⁵”

[9a] Case Study 9 Prompt: “average cost of digital to analog converter”

[9b] Case Study 9 Google Gemini Outcome: “The cost of a Digital-to-Analog Converter (DAC) varies widely, depending entirely on whether you're buying the standalone **integrated circuit (IC) chip** for electronics or a **complete audio device**.

1. DAC Integrated Circuit (IC) Chip (For Electronics) 💡

These are the bare components used in circuit board design and are the cheapest option.

- **Average Range (Small Quantity): \$1.00 to \$25.00**
- **Low-End:** Basic 8-bit or 10-bit DAC chips often cost **under \$5.00** per unit.
- **Mid-Range:** Higher-resolution (12-bit to 16-bit) or multichannel industrial DACs typically cost **\$5.00 to \$25.00**.
- **High-End/Specialty:** Extremely high-speed, precision, or RF-sampling DACs (used in telecom or test equipment) can cost **\$50 to over \$1,000** per chip in volume.

2. Consumer Audio DAC Devices (For Hi-Fi/Headphones) 🎧

These are finished products that include the DAC chip, a housing, power supply, input/output ports, and often a headphone amplifier (DAC/Amp).

Category	Typical Price Range	Description
Budget Portable "Dongle" DACs	\$20 to \$150	USB-C dongles (like the AudioQuest DragonFly series or iFi Go Link) that connect to phones/laptops for better audio quality.
Entry-Level Desktop DACs	\$100 to \$350	Standalone units (like the Schiit Modi+ or Topping D10s) that offer excellent measured performance for a home audio system.

Mid-Range/High-Performance DACs	\$400 to \$1,000	Offer high-end features, better power supplies, balanced outputs (XLR), and sophisticated filtering (e.g., Cambridge Audio DacMagic).
Audiophile/Reference DACs	\$1,500 to over \$10,000	Premium devices with extreme attention to internal component quality, chassis design, and proprietary digital processing, targeting the high-fidelity market (e.g., Chord Qutest, RME ADI-2 DAC).

For a consumer looking to significantly upgrade their computer or phone audio, an excellent, high-performing DAC can often be found in the **\$100 to \$200** range.”

[10a] Case Study 10 Prompt: “Explain how I can use a variable waveplate to change the polarization of light”

[10b] ChatGPT Response: “A *variable waveplate*—usually a **liquid crystal variable retarder (LCVR)** or **electro-optic modulator**—lets you continuously adjust how much *phase delay* is introduced between two orthogonal polarization components of a beam. By changing that phase delay, you change the polarization state of the light.

Start with the fundamentals

Any linearly polarized light can be thought of as having two components:

- One component along the **fast axis** of the waveplate
- One component along the **slow axis** of the waveplate

The waveplate delays one axis relative to the other.

This **relative delay** is called *retardance* (in units of radians or in fractions of a wavelength like $\frac{1}{4}$ -wave or $\frac{1}{2}$ -wave).

So what does adjusting the retardance do?

Retardance	Waveplate type	Effect on polarization (if input is linear at 45° to axes)
0	No waveplate	Output remains linear with same orientation
$\pi/4$ ($\lambda/4$)	Quarter-wave plate	Converts linear → circular (or elliptical depending on input angle)

Retardance	Waveplate type	Effect on polarization (if input is linear at 45° to axes)
$\pi/2$ ($\lambda/2$)	Half-wave plate	Rotates the angle of linear polarization
Other values	“Variable retarder”	Produces elliptical polarization

So by tuning the retardance electronically, you can smoothly move between:

Linear → Elliptical → Circular → Elliptical → Linear (at a new angle)

How this is done in practice

1. **Send linearly polarized light in.**

Let's say the polarization is at **45°** to the waveplate axes (this is important—if aligned to an axis, nothing changes).

2. **Apply voltage to the variable waveplate.**

- Increasing voltage changes the **birefringence** of the material.
- Changing birefringence changes the **retardance**.

3. **Observe the polarization change:**

- At low voltage → maybe acts like a **half-wave plate** → rotates linear polarization.
- At moderate voltage → becomes **elliptically** polarized.
- At the right voltage → acts like a **quarter-wave plate** → produces **circular polarization**.
- At high voltage → elliptical again, etc.

Example

Suppose your input polarization is linear:

↗ (45° to axes)

- Set retardance = **0** → output is ↗ (same linear)
- Set retardance = $\lambda/4$ → output becomes **circular**
- Set retardance = $\lambda/2$ → output becomes linear rotated to ↘
- Set retardance = **some intermediate amount** → output becomes **elliptical**

So you can *dial* polarization like turning a knob.

Key Practical Points

Factor	Why it matters
Input polarization must not be aligned to waveplate axes	Otherwise no polarization change occurs.
Temperature affects retardance	So many systems include feedback or heating stabilization.
Wavelength dependent	Must match your operating wavelength range.

In short

A variable waveplate works by **changing the phase difference** between two perpendicular components of light.

By adjusting that phase delay (usually via voltage), you can produce **any polarization state** on the Poincaré sphere:

linear ↔ **elliptical** ↔ **circular**, and rotate the polarization angle as well.”

[11a] Case Study 11 Prompt: “I need to collimate light from a LED with a full viewing angle of 80 degrees into a beam with a diameter of no more than 30mm. Can you recommend a lens and give examples?”

[11b] ChatGPT Response: “Nice — you can get that easily with a short-focal-length aspheric/condenser lens. Below I’ll (A) show the arithmetic so you can see the requirement, (B) give two concrete lens examples that meet it, and (C) note practical tips (LED emitter size, mounting, coatings).

Quick design arithmetic (step-by-step)

Your LED full viewing angle = $80^\circ \rightarrow$ half-angle $\theta = 40^\circ$.

For a lens placed near the LED (effectively the lens at the LED’s focal distance), the approximate collimated beam diameter D is

$$D \approx 2f \tan(\theta)$$

where f is the lens focal length.

Compute $\tan(40^\circ)$ precisely:

- $\tan(40^\circ) \approx 0.8390996311772799$.

Now plug in candidate focal lengths:

- If $f = 16.0$ mm: $D \approx 2 \times 16.0 \times 0.8390996311772799 = 26.851$ mm.

- If $f = 17.5$ mm: $D \approx 2 \times 17.5 \times 0.8390996311772799 = 29.368$ mm.
- If $f = 20.0$ mm: $D \approx 33.564$ mm (too large for your 30 mm cap).

So any lens with focal length $\leq \sim 17.9$ mm will produce ≤ 30 mm beam diameter for a point-source LED with 80° full angle. (Calculation above: $30 \text{ mm} / (2 \cdot \tan 40^\circ) \approx 17.87$ mm.)

[Edmund Optics+1](#)

Concrete lens recommendations (examples)

1. **TECHSPEC / Edmund Optics — 30.0 mm dia $\times$ 17.5 mm FL molded aspheric condenser**
 - 30 mm diameter, focal length = 17.5 mm $\rightarrow$ calculated beam ≈ 29.37 mm, so it meets your ≤ 30 mm requirement and the aperture is large enough to collect the full 80° cone. Good choice if you want to *capture the whole LED cone* and have the beam just under 30 mm. [Edmund Optics](#)
2. **Edmund Optics — 25.4 mm (1") dia $\times$ 16.0 mm FL aspheric condenser**
 - 25.4 mm diameter, focal length = 16 mm $\rightarrow$ calculated beam ≈ 26.85 mm. This produces a slightly smaller beam, but note the lens diameter (25.4 mm) is just a hair *smaller* than the ideal collection aperture for the full 80° cone (so you may clip a little of the outermost rays). If you don't need absolutely every edge ray, this is compact and common. (Part listings: 25.4 mm $\times$ 16 mm aspheric condenser.) [Edmund Optics+1](#)
3. **Alternatives / secondary optics**
 - If you prefer very high throughput and compact secondary optics made specifically for LEDs, look at **TIR / molded LED secondary optics** (Carclo, Ledil, Khatod). These are specified by output beam angle rather than focal length; pick a TIR optic that produces $\leq \sim 30$ mm beam at your working distance or that outputs a comparable beam half-angle. TIR optics are very efficient but require matching to the LED package. [Carcelo Optics+1](#)

Practical notes & “gotchas”

- **Emitter size matters.** The arithmetic above assumes a pointlike emitter. Many LEDs are extended sources (chip size, phosphor dome). Extended emitters increase divergence and require small adjustments to lens-to-LED spacing; you'll often need to *move the LED a few mm* from the nominal focal plane to minimize wavefront error and get the flattest beam. If you give the LED part number or emitter dimensions I can compute a more accurate expected divergence and optimum spacing.

- **Lens diameter vs collected cone.** To *collect the full 80°* the lens clear aperture D should satisfy $D \geq 2f \tan(40^\circ)$. That's why the 30 mm $\times$ 17.5 mm lens is a tidy match (collection aperture $\approx$ beam diameter). The 25.4 mm $\times$ 16 mm lens still gives <30 mm beam but will clip the extreme outer rays of an ideal 80° cone.
 - **Coatings / wavelength:** choose an AR coating tuned to your LED wavelength (visible vs NIR) to reduce reflection losses.
 - **Mounting:** buy a lens tube or holder sized to the lens diameter (SM1 / 1" accessories are convenient for 25.4 mm optics; for 30 mm look for compatible holders or mount adapters).
 - **If you need a perfectly flat top / uniform intensity:** add a condenser + diffuser or a beam homogenizer; that reduces usable throughput but improves uniformity. Thorlabs/Edmund have diffuser-backed aspheric condensers if you want uniform illumination. [Thorlabs+1](#)
-

If you want, I can:

- pick exact part numbers with vendor SKUs and (if you want) estimate expected collected optical power given a specific LED part number, or
- show a quick ray sketch and predict how much of the LED's 80° cone will be collected by each lens.

Which would you like next?"

[12a] Case Study 11 Prompt: “average cost of digital to analog converter

[12b] ChatGPT Response: “The cost of a digital-to-analog converter (DAC) can vary widely depending on performance, input/output formats, and use case. Here are some observations and typical price ranges:

💡 Price Ranges & Examples

Here are a few representative products, from simple to very high end:

[Insignia Optical/Coaxial Digital-to-Analog Audio Converter](#)

basic home adapter

\$29.99

[Home Collection 192 kHz Digital to Analog Audio Converter](#)

budget home converter

\$18.49

FiiO KA11 Portable Digital-to-Analog Converter

portable audio DAC

\$36.99

Yichuhaoxi Digital to Analog Audio Converter 192 kHz

entry home cinema DAC

\$41.86

Rockville RDAC5B Digital-to-Analog Converter

mid-home audio DAC

\$64.95

Cambridge Audio DacMagic 200M Digital-to-Analog Converter

high-end audiophile DAC

\$399.00

NuPrime DAC-10 Digital to Analog Converter

ultra-high-end DAC

\$1,749.00

HiFi Rose RD160 Stereo Digital-to-Analog Converter

flagship audiophile DAC

\$5,995.00

And here's a quick breakdown:

- **Insignia Optical/Coaxial Digital-to-Analog Audio Converter**: approx \$30.
 - **Home Collection 192 kHz Digital to Analog Audio Converter**: around \$18–20.
 - **FiiO KA11 Portable Digital-to-Analog Converter**: approx \$37.
 - **Yichuhaoxi Digital to Analog Audio Converter 192 kHz**: approx \$41.86.
 - **Rockville RDAC5B Digital-to-Analog Converter**: around \$64.95.
 - **Cambridge Audio DacMagic 200M Digital-to-Analog Converter**: around \$399.
 - **NuPrime DAC-10 Digital to Analog Converter**: about \$1,234 (for a high-end model).
 - **HiFi Rose RD160 Stereo Digital-to-Analog Converter**: up around \$5,995 for ultra-high-end.
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Typical “Average Cost”

- For simple home audio/consumer use, many DACs fall in the \$20–\$60 range. (E.g., many optical/coax to analog adapters cost ~\$10–\$30). ([Walmart.com](#))
 - For mid-level audiophile use, you’ll see prices in the \$300–\$500 range. ([The Master Switch](#))
 - For high-performance/flagship models, the price can go well above \$1,000, even into thousands. ([Hi-Fi Heaven](#))
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What “Average” Means for You

If you’re looking for a typical usable DAC for home/consumer purposes (not ultra-audiophile), you can reasonably budget \$20 to \$100 and find a good one.

If you have more demanding performance requirements (especially for hi-fi, studio, or audiophile uses), plan for \$300+ and upward.

If you like, I can look up average cost specifically for industrial/engineering-grade DACs (for your optics/photonic work) or USB/portable DACs (for computer use) and pull more precise recent market data. Would you like me to do that?”