

RS232 Communication protocol for AAG_CloudWatcher

Communication is always established by requesting information from device.

Request information

The request commands consist of 1 character followed by ! (exclamation mark) which is interpreted by the AAG_CloudWatcher device as end-of-command. Note that the only exception is the command that sets the Pulse Width modulation value.

Command	Description	
A!	Get internal name	
B!	Get firmware version	
C!	Get values	
D!	Get internal errors	
E!	Get rain frequency	
F!	Get switch status	
G!	Set switch – open	
H!	Set switch – close	
Pxxxx!	Set PWM Value <i>xxxx</i> = value of PWM (always 4 characters)	Exception in command length
Q!	Get PWM value	
S!	Get Sky IR Temp	
T!	Get Sensor Temp	
z!	Reset RS232 buffer pointers	

Received Information

The length of the information structure returned by the AAG_CloudWatcher device is always a multiple of 15 characters string as follows:

!XXyyyyyyyyyyyyyy

Characters	Description	Length
!	Begin of information	1 byte
XX	Information Nature	2 bytes
yyyyyyyyyyyyyy	Information content related to the Nature	12 bytes

NB: The quotes shown in 1st column of the table below are not present in the information returned by AAG_CloudWatcher. They are shown to delimit the 2 characters and show that the 2nd character is in most cases a space.

Meaning of XX	Description of yyyyyyyyyyyy
"1 "	Infra red temperature in hundredth of degree Celsius
"2 "	Infra red sensor temperature in hundredth of degree Celsius
"3 "	Analog0 output 0-1023 => 0 to full voltage (Ambient Temp NTC)
"4 "	Analog2 output 0-1023 => 0 to full voltage (LDR ambient light)
"5 "	Analog3 output 0-1023 => 0 to full voltage (Rain Sensor Temp NTC)
"6 "	Analog3 output 0-1023 => 0 to full voltage (Zener Voltage reference)
"E1"	Number of internal errors reading infra red sensor: 1st address byte
"E2"	Number of internal errors reading infra red sensor: command byte
"E3"	Number of internal errors reading infra red sensor: 2nd address byte
"E4"	Number of internal errors reading infra red sensor: PEC byte NB: the error counters are reset after being read.
"N "	Internal Name
"V "	Firmware Version number
"Q "	PWM duty cycle
"R "	Rain frequency counter
"X "	Switch Opened
"Y "	Switch Closed
chr(XON) +chr(32)	Handshaking XON (= 0x11) (= 17)

Detailed Description of Received Information

The AAG_CloudWatcher always returns information in blocks of 15 characters. The meaning of the 15 character blocks are described in the above table.

However different commands will return different number of blocks as described in the following table:

Sent	Received			
Command	No of Blocks	Total no. of characters	Block Content	Meaning
A!	2	30	1 st block: !N CloudWatcher 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Internal name 2 nd block: Handshaking block
B!	2	30	1 st block: !N 1.10 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Firmware version 2 nd block: Handshaking block
C!	5	75	1 st block: !6 xxxx 2 nd block: !3 xxxx 3 rd block: !4 xxxx 4 th block: !5 xxxx 5 th block: !¶ 0	1 st block: xxxx Zener voltage 2 nd block: xxxx Ambient Temperature 3 rd block: xxxx LDR voltage 4 th block: xxxx Rain Sensor Temperature 5 th block: Handshaking block
D!	5	75	1 st block: !E1 nnnnn 2 nd block: !E2 nnnnn 3 rd block: !E3 nnnnn 4 th block: !E4 nnnnn 5 th block: !¶ 0	1 st block: nnnnn 1 st address byte errors 2 nd block: nnnnn Command byte errors 3 rd block: nnnnn 2 nd address byte errors 4 th block: nnnnn PEC byte errors 5 th block: Handshaking block

E!	2	30	1 st block: !R xxxx 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: xxxx Rain frequency 2 nd block: Handshaking block
F!	2	30	1 st block: !X 2 nd block: !¶ 0 or 1 st block: !Y 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Switch Open 2 nd block: Handshaking block or 1 st block: Switch Close 2 nd block: Handshaking block
G!	2	30	1 st block: !X 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Switch Open 2 nd block: Handshaking block
H!	2	30	1 st block: !Y 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Switch Close 2 nd block: Handshaking block
Ppppp!	2	30	1 st block: !Q pppp 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: PWM duty cycle 2 nd block: Handshaking block
Q!	2	30	1 st block: !Q pppp 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: pppp PWM duty cycle 2 nd block: Handshaking block
S!	2	30	1 st block: !1 tttt 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: tttt IR sky temperature 2 nd block: Handshaking block
T!	2	30	1 st block: !2 tttt 2 nd block: !¶ 0	1 st block: tttt IR sensor temperature 2 nd block: Handshaking block
z!	1	15	1 st block: !¶ 0	1 st block: Handshaking block

NOTE: xxxx represents a value between 0 and 1023 which relates to the 10 bit microprocessor D/A converter;

NOTE: nnnnn represents a positive integer;

NOTE: ttttt represents a positive integer which represents the temperature in hundredth of degree Celsius, e.g. ttttt = 2456 => 24.56 °C;

NOTE: ppppp represents a value between 0 and 1023 which relates to the 10 bit microprocessor PWM modulator;

NOTE: The handshaking block represented in the above table as “!¶ 0” consists of 15 characters:

Pos	Content
1	Exclamation mark = char 0x21 (hexadecimal) or 33 (decimal)
2	XON = char 0x11 (hexadecimal) or 17 (decimal)
3	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
4	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
5	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
6	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
7	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
8	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
9	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
10	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
11	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
12	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
13	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
14	Space = char 0x20 (hexadecimal) or 32 (decimal)
15	ZERO = char 0x30 (hexadecimal) or 48 (decimal)

Communication operational recommendations

The device firmware was developed using MikroBasic. The RS232 communications make use of microprocessor interrupts. On the other hand the rain frequency is measured using an internal counter and an interrupt microprocessor line.

To prevent a mix up in the microprocessor interrupts, I strongly suggest the following:

1. When communicating with the device send one command at a time and wait for the respective reply, checking that the correct number of characters has been received;
2. Perform more than one single reading (say, 5) and apply a statistical analysis to the values to exclude any outlier. I am using 5 readings and calculate the average value (AVG) and standard deviation (STD). Any values that are outside the range **AVG-STD** and **AVG+STD** are excluded. The final value is the average of the values which were not excluded;
3. The rain frequency measurement is the one that takes more time - 280 ms approximately;
4. The following reading cycle takes just less than 3 seconds to perform;

Perform 5 times

get IR temperature	command "S!"
get Ambient temperature	command "T!"
get Values	command "C!"
get Rain Frequency	command "E!"
loop	
get PWM value	command "Q!"
get IR errors	command "D!"
get SWITCH Status	command "F!"

5. The Visual Basic 6 main program makes use of the RS232 control event to handle the device replies, thus avoiding the program to wait for the end of the above cycle.
6. The algorithm that controls the heating cycles of the rain sensor is also programmed in the Visual Basic 6 main program and not in the device microprocessor.

Converting values sent by the device to meaningful units

1. The infrared temperature is converted to °C by dividing it by 100;
2. The temperature of the infrared sensor is converted to °C by dividing it by 100;
3. Pulse Width values are converted to % by

$$\text{PWM} = 100 * \text{xxxx} / 1023$$

where

xxxx = value sent by the device

PWM = pulse width as %

4. The internal supply voltage value is calculated from the Zener voltage value converted to volts by:

$$V_s = 1023 * \text{ZenerConstant} / \text{xxxx}$$

where

xxxx = value sent by the device

V_s = internal supply voltage in V

ZenerConstant = 3

5. The ambient temperature is calculated in °C by

If xxxx > 1022 Then xxxx = 1022

If xxxx < 1 Then xxxx = 1

r = AmbPullUpResistance / ((1023 / xxxx) - 1) 'resistance K ohms

r = Log(r / AmbResAt25)

TAmb = 1 / (r / AmbBeta + 1 / (ABSZERO + 25)) - ABSZERO

where

Log = The log function is the natural log (usually Ln)

xxxx = value sent by the device

TAmb = ambient temperature in °C

AmbPullUpResistance = 9.9

AmbResAt25 = 10

AmbBeta = 3811

ABSZERO = 273.15

xxxx corresponds to the value sent by the device

6. LDR value is calculated in K ohms by

If xxxx > 1022 Then xxxx = 1022

If xxxx < 1 Then xxxx = 1

LDR = LDRPullupResistance / ((1023 / xxxx) - 1) 'resistance K ohms

where

xxxx = value sent by the device

LDR = LDR resistance in K ohms

LDRPullupResistance = 56

7. Rain sensor temperature is calculated in °C by

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If xxxx > 1022 Then xxxx = 1022
If xxxx < 1 Then xxxx = 1
r = RainPullUpResistance / ((1023 / xxxx) - 1) 'resistance K ohms
r = Log(r / RainResAt25)
TRain = 1 / (r / RainBeta + 1 / (ABSZERO + 25)) - ABSZERO
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where

Log = The log function is the natural log (usually Ln)

xxxx = value sent by the device

TRain = rain sensor temperature in °C

RainPullUpResistance = 1

RainResAt25 = 1

RainBeta = 3450

ABSZERO = 273.15

8. Rain frequency is equal to the value sent by the device.