

Sustainable Transportation with Electric Vehicles

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Abstract

Electric vehicles are gaining more and more popularity due to low oil dependency and low emission. Their deep penetration will significantly benefit the environment, but meanwhile will cause two crucial consequences. First, electric vehicles introduce heavy load impact into the power grid by shifting energy demand from gasoline to electricity. The surging load will compromise the grid's reliability and jeopardize its power supply quality. Second, charging stations become indispensable infrastructure to support large deployment of electric vehicles. The availability in public destinations comes with electric vehicles competing for both power supply and service points of charging stations. The competition degrades quality of service and thus can compromise the original intent of advocating electric vehicles.

There are many research efforts addressing either of the two consequences above. Different with them, we consider both and jointly study quality of service for electric vehicle users and reliability of the power grid. We review recent developments on this topic in this article. In Chapter 1, we introduce the ecosystem of electric vehicles and discuss motivations for managing charging load. This chapter further presents a systematic solution framework for smart electric vehicle charging. The following chapters then study each block of the framework. Specially, in Chapter 2, we investigate charging rate control, which handles how to allocate power supply to electric vehicles within a charging station. In Chapter 3, we address electric vehicle demand response, which is how to make electric vehicles follow the power supply of charging stations and the power grid. In Chapter 4, we study electric vehicle scheduling, which copes with how to schedule electric vehicles to multiple charging points within a charging station. In Chapter 5, we discuss charging demand balancing, which deals with how to balance electric vehicles among multiple charging stations.

In these chapters, we first present deployable algorithms and mechanisms that are designed for each framework blocks. Then, we evaluate the proposed approaches by two complementary ways. One way is leveraging theoretical analysis to demonstrate their performance guarantees, while the other is using extensive simulations based on realistic

data traces and simulation tools. We also review studies that align with the corresponding framework blocks and consider additional dimensions and/or different optimization goals. Finally, in Chapter 6, we conclude the article with summaries of main ideas discussed in the previous chapters.

1

Introduction and Overview

The transportation sector is by far the largest oil consumer and thus a prime contributor to air pollution. For example, the sector accounts for about 23% of the global GHG emissions in 2014 [1]. The growing concerns over environmental impacts and oil scarcity have boosted the need to electrify the transportation sector and spurred efforts to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). As shown by Fig. 1.1(a), the yearly EV sales for U.S. have grown more than 6 times from 2011 to 2015, and as shown by Fig. 1.1(b), the worldwide yearly sales would be over 6 million by 2020. Further, the number of EVs in the globe would be over 35 million by 2022 [2].

The popularity of EVs will significantly benefit the environment and alleviate energy crisis, but meanwhile will cause heavy load impact to the power grid due to shifting energy demand from gasoline to electricity. The potential impact includes compromising the grid's reliability and jeopardizing its power quality. For example, uncoordinated EV charging can increase the peak load and energy losses and overload distribution lines and transformers [3, 4, 5, 6]. Overloading can overheat the transformers, and accelerate their degradation, and eventually cause premature failure to them. This impact would be even severer

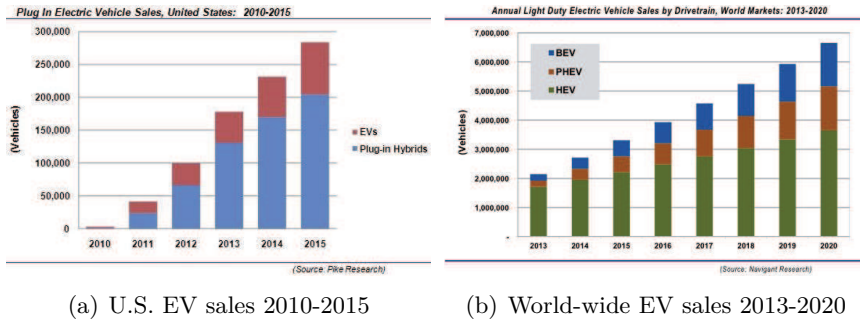


Figure 1.1: Market research about EV sales.

with some eco-friendly areas such as neighbourhoods with higher penetration of EVs.

Recently, various charging facilities have been deployed such as charging points in residential areas and working places [3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]. Among them, charging stations have become indispensable infrastructure to support the deep integration of electric vehicles [10, 11, 12, 13, 14]. Meanwhile, one crucial consequence following their public availability is that EVs will compete for charging resources such as power supply and service points of these charging stations. This competition can much degrade the quality of service if there is no coordination performed among EV users when making decisions on choosing charging stations. For example, some charging stations may be overloaded with long waiting queues of charging demand (and thus long waiting time for EVs) while others barely have EVs to serve. Some EVs that have a tight schedule may be allocated with lower power supply than EVs with adequate spare time for charging.

There are two different methods to accommodate the large-scale EV charging load. The first method is to make the required investment to upgrade the power grid and build more charging facilities. The second method is to exploit the elasticity of charging load and existing communication networks to coordinate and control EV charging, i.e., to enable smart EV charging. This method postpones upgrading or building new charging infrastructure and thus substantially reduces the required reinforcement investment [15, 16]. This article focuses on the

latter method and studies smart EV charging. In the following, we first present an overview for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, and then reveal emerging challenges and propose a systematic solution framework for smart EV charging.

1.1 Electric Vehicle Overview

Although EVs were first introduced many decades ago, their resurgence and actual popularity start recently due to technological developments and the environmental impact of petroleum-based transportation [17]. Electric vehicles use electric motors for propulsion and can be powered by electricity from on-board batteries. In contrast, conventional vehicles use internal combustion engines for propulsion and usually depend on non-renewable fossil fuels. These two kinds of vehicles are different in that the electricity EVs consume can be generated from a wide range of energy sources, including fossil fuels and renewable sources such as solar power and wind power or the combinations of those sources. EVs, if sourcing from renewable, thus come with lower carbon footprint and other emissions than conventional vehicles.

This article confines to studying plug-in electric vehicles, which can be recharged from any external source of electricity, such as the power grid and local renewable generation. Plug-in EVs can be further classified into two different types: all-electric or battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). BEVs only use electric motors for propulsion instead of internal combustion engines. They have no fuel tank and derive all power from rechargeable batteries on-board. Examples of BEVs include Nissan Leaf, Ford Focus Electric, Tesla Model S, BMW i3, and BYD Qin EV300. Fig. 1.2(a) shows Nissan Leaf 2017. PHEVs share the characteristics of both conventional vehicles and BEVs, and thus have both electric motors and internal combustion engines. They can derive power both from on-board batteries that can be recharged by plugging into external sources, and from combusting fossil fuel from fuel tanks. Examples of PHEVs include Chevrolet Volt, BYD F3DM, BMW i8, and Toyota Prius. Fig. 1.2(b) shows Chevrolet Volt 2017.



Figure 1.2: Examples of BEV and PHEV.

Most plug-in EVs of this generation use lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries. Compared to most other rechargeable batteries, li-ion batteries have advantages such as higher energy density, higher power density, and long life span. For example, Nissan Leaf has 30 kWh battery pack with 172 km on a full battery charge, while the latest Tesla Model S is equipped with 100 kWh battery pack, which can allow a driving range as long as 539 km . Battery life span is defined as the number of full charge-discharge cycles before significant capacity loss. Li-ion batteries degrade, in terms of capacity, energy efficiency, as the number of cycles increases. To maintain a long life span, li-ion batteries should not operate with frequent mode switching, i.e., switching between charging and discharging. One disadvantage is that li-ion batteries can pose safety issues since they contain flammable electrolytes. For example, it would be very risky to charge EV batteries with a power supply larger than the allowed maximum charging rate. In order to operate safely and efficiently, li-ion batteries should be used within safe temperature and certain power ranges.

1.2 Charging Infrastructure Overview

Charging stations or charging points are a fundamental element in charging infrastructure that supplies electricity for the recharging of EVs. The charging infrastructure usually exists in three different contexts. The first is residential charging stations, where an EV owner plugs in when he or she at home, and the EV usually charges overnight

Table 1.1: Charging Standard Specification [23].

Charging Level	Voltage [V]	Max. Current [A]	Max. Power [kW]
AC Level 1	120	12	1.44
AC Level 2	208-240	48	11.5
AC Level 3	208-240	400	96
DC Charging	208-600	400	240

[3, 18]. The second context is park-and-charge, i.e., charging while parked, where a parking lot is equipped with charging function and EVs can receive recharging while parked [19, 20]. This scenario encourages EV users to take advantage of nearby facilities, such as parking stations including parking at malls, working places and airports. The third is publicly available fast charging stations, which usually can provide an individual charging rate larger than 40 *kw* and takes dozens of minutes to deliver tens of miles [5]. This article mainly studies charging stations falling into the latter two contexts, i.e., publicly available charging stations.

As EV ownership is expanding, there is a growing need for charging stations available in public destinations. As of the end of 2015, the number of public charging points deployed in the globe reached around 190*k*, up from 110*k* in 2014 and about 50*k* in 2013 [21]. As of May 2017, around 16*k* electric stations and about 43*k* charging points are available to the public in North America [22]. These charging stations leverage multiple sensors such as current sensors to provide better safety and reliability than residential charging points. These sensors can monitor the power consumed and EVs can be automatically connected or disconnected according to the power demand status. With this capability, public stations can protect the charger and EVs from overheating and thus potential damages. Further, public charging stations are usually capable of charging EVs with higher charging rate than residential charging points, because different charging standards and techniques are applied to the two different contexts.

Charging standards used in North American mainly follow the SAE International standard SAE J1772, where four standards are devel-

oped [23]. Table 1.1 shows the specification for the four charging standards. AC level 1 has the lowest power capacity and is mainly used in residential charging points, or other application scenarios that EV users have plenty of time for recharging their vehicles. By contrast, the other three standards have much higher power capacity and are used by most public charging stations, or other application scenarios that there are high expectations on charging rate and charging time. The fast charging capability of AC level 3 and DC charging can significantly shorten the charging time of EVs. For example, charging time for 100 *km* is about 20 – 30 minutes with AC level 3 and it is about 10 minutes with DC charging.

Fast charging stations, especially those enabled with AC level 3 and DC charging, introduce high power load on the power grid. There are two ways that can mitigate this load impact. One way is to schedule and coordinate EV charging according to the load status of the power grid, e.g., charging EVs when the power grid has reduced load or reduced electricity cost. One enabler to coordinating EV charging is that EVs, charging stations and the power grid can communicate with each other. The other way is to locally install power generation such as solar power to loose the need for the power grid, which thus alleviates the load impact caused by EV charging. Another advantage here is that EVs can source from the power grid at opportune time to reduce their charging cost, such as at off-peak time or when the electricity price is high. In this article, we study both methods as well as the combination of these two methods.

1.3 Electric Vehicle Charging Overview

The increasing integration of electric vehicles has motivated many research efforts from both industry and academia. These efforts can be partitioned into two important groups, which respectively address the two crucial consequences mentioned above. The first group centers around the power grid oriented consequence, which is the associated heavy load impact that can compromise the stability and reliability of the power grid. The second group focuses on the EV user oriented con-

sequence, which is the quality of service degradation caused by EVs' competition on charging resources including charging points and the power supply.

Power Grid Oriented EV Charging. Studies falling into this group address how to mitigate the potential grid impact associated with large-scale EV charging. Unbalance between charging demand and power supply will occur if the interaction between EVs and the power grid is uncontrolled or uncoordinated. This fact is revealed in [24], which shows that there is a positive dependence between charging load impact and the penetration levels of EVs. Uncoordinated loads can cause a series of issues such as power loss, low energy efficiency, frequency deviation, and voltage deviation, which in turn jeopardize the stability and reliability of the power grid. These issues are investigated by two major research threads.

The first thread is load flattening and example works include [4, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30]. In general, these works alleviate the unbalance between charging demand and power supply through shifting charging demand to the power valley of the power grid, i.e., valley filling. Flattening power load is further demonstrated to be effective to improve energy efficiency and power loss of the power grid [6]. The second thread is frequency regulation and example studies include [31, 32, 33, 34, 35]. A gap between power supply and demand on the power grid causes the grid frequency to deviate from its nominal value, and the goal of frequency regulation is to reduce this gap. EVs are capable of making rapid response to frequency changes, and thus they are regarded as suitable for providing frequency regulation service. However, conventionally, power generators that are capable of providing MW-scale power are utilized for frequency regulation. To meet this power capacity threshold, these existing works investigate the aggregated power by a large number of vehicles and regard these EVs as a whole to provide frequency regulation.

The above works focus on addressing the power grid impact. This confined focus can cause degradation to quality of service to EV users, i.e., blindly following requirements from the power grid may not result in beneficial results for EV users. For example, a number of EVs may

have to charge at rather low rates to reduce power load on the grid, which will compromise user satisfaction. Different with these existing works, this article considers both the power grid and EV users and jointly studies the stability and reliability of the former and quality of service for the latter.

EV User Oriented EV Charging. Works belonging to this group study how to well handle the competition on charging resources in order to improve EV user satisfaction or quality of service. EV user satisfaction depends on key aspects such as charging cost, charging time, charging rate, and travel distance/time to charging points. There are two major research threads that present charging schemes to benefit EV users in terms of the above aspects.

The first thread is opportune charging and/or discharging and example works include [36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41]. In general, these works charge and/or discharge vehicles at some opportune time. For example, charging EVs when the electricity price is low results in reduced charging cost, and charging EVs when the charging rate is high will reduce charging time. The second thread is EV routing and examples studies include [42, 43, 44]. As to the routing problem for fuel-based vehicles, it usually needs to consider only two factors: fuel price and travel distance/time to gas stations. As to EV routing, besides charging price and travel distance/time to charging stations, it needs to consider another key factor, which is queueing time. The existence of queueing for EV charging is mainly because of two reasons: EV charging takes much longer time compared to gas fueling and there is a limited number of charging points. Thus, there is a much higher opportunity for EVs to queue and wait for the availability of charging points, and further their waiting time is usually much longer. To reduce the queueing time and improve quality of service, it should distribute EVs to charging stations as evenly as possible. However, to follow routes with reduced queueing time may conflict with the other goals such as reducing charging cost and travel distance/time to stations.

These existing works only discuss one or two of the mentioned aspects related to user satisfaction. By contrast, we present a holistic framework that studies multiple aspects including not only all the men-

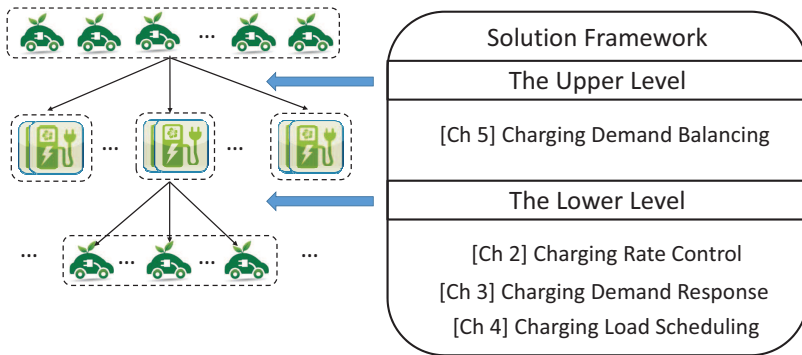


Figure 1.3: A figure illustrating the application scenario and a block diagram showing the proposed systematic solution framework.

tioned aspects but also new aspects such as the level of users' urgency and user behavior's uncertainty. Further, many works of the first thread consider a direct interaction between the power grid and charging stations, and all works of the second thread only consider the interaction between charging stations and EV users. By contrast, this article discusses a hierarchical interaction among the power grid, charging stations, and EV users.

1.4 A Systematic Solution Framework

This article considers an application scenario, as illustrated in Fig. 1.3, where multiple charging stations are publicly available in an urban area and many electric vehicles demands charging service from these charging stations. For this application scenario, we propose a systematic solution framework that employs a hierarchical operational structure. There are two levels in the framework.

The lower level determines how to allocate power supply to vehicles plugged in within a charging station. For this level, we discuss three different cases according to the operation mode of the power grid and the configuration of charging facilities. The first two cases both investigate charging facilities that are able to change power rates continuously. The difference between them is that one case, called charging rate control, focuses on the normal operation of the power grid, while the other

case, called charging demand response, confines to the demand response period of the power grid. The two cases leverage time-driven methods due to the continuity of charging rate regulation. By contrast, the third case, called charging load scheduling, handles charging facilities with fixed charging rates. This case adopts event-driven methods to schedule vehicles to multiple charging points within a charging station.

The upper level decides how to balance vehicles that are demanding charging service among multiple charging stations, which is called charging demand balancing. The decision is made according to several key factors including charging demand of each individual vehicle, travel distances to charging stations, and detour distances to destinations, charging prices of charging stations, and uncertainty of EV user behavior. We propose several efficient and effective decision-making algorithms for this level.

1.5 Road Map

Fig. 1.3 depicts the road map of this article. Chapter 2 to Chapter 4 focus on the lower level and study charging rate control, charging demand response, and charging load scheduling respectively. Chapter 5 confines to the upper level and discusses charging demand balancing. In these chapters, we first design deployable algorithms and mechanisms and then evaluate the proposed approaches through two complementary methods. One method is to use theoretical analysis to demonstrate their performance guarantees, while the other method is to leverage extensive simulations based on realistic data traces and simulation tools. We also review existing studies that align with the problems studied in each chapter and further consider additional dimensions and/or different optimization goals. Finally, in Chapter 6, we conclude the article with summaries of main ideas discussed in the previous chapters.

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