

#### **Control of SMPS – a Refresher Part 1**

**Colin Gillmor (APP, HPC)**



# **Control of SMPS – a Refresher:**



#### Ŀ. **Control of SMPS – a Refresher:**

#### **1. Concepts**

- 2. Transfer Functions
- 3. Control Systems
- 4. Loop Transfer Functions Control to Output: G(s) Power Stage (Plant) Output to Control: H(s) Feedback (Control)
- 5. Loop Compensation
- 6. Loop Compensation
- 7. Measuring the Control Loop
- 8. Summary and other issues
- 9. References





Controllability:

- What variables can we use to control the system's state
- Eg: Switching Frequency, Duty Cycle, Handlebars Observability:
- How can we determine the system's state
- Eg: Measure Vout, Vin, Iout, Inductor Current, Eyes

Reachability:

- Does the control system have enough authority to do what we want it to do?
- Eg: Transient response, Trim range, Current limit Start-up time, Lean limits (aka, training wheels)

#### Control:

- Measure the system
- Compare to reference
- Adjust appropriately





## **Concepts: LTI, Linear Time-Invariant**

Linearity  $f(a+b) = f(a) + f(b)$ ,  $f(k^*a) = k^*f(a)$ 

- System response doesn't depend on the load power or current
- Non-Linear at OCP, OVP, Enhanced Dynamic Response etc

Time Invariance

- System does not change with time
- Exceptions at power up, power down, OCP etc
- Switching action in power stage must be averaged Continuous time assumed
- Time variable is continuous and can take up any value
- Assumption is valid up to about 20% of switching frequency

#### SMPS are not linear and are not time invariant !



So we 'cheat' and build a model which is LTI  $\odot$ 

**Linearisation** 



**TEXAS INSTRUMENTS** 

Typical Buck Converter modॄel Switching frequency does not appear in the transfer function !

#### 厚 **Concepts: Complex Frequency (s)**

Complex Frequency:  $s = \sigma + j\omega$ 

σ sets decay rate,

- $\sigma > 0$ , increasing:  $\sigma < 0$ , decaying:  $\sigma = 0$ , steady state
- We set  $\sigma$  to 0 and so that  $s = j\omega$
- $\bullet$   $\omega$  is the frequency of the underlying sine wave

$$
V_{i}(t) = Re(V_{m}e^{\sigma \cdot t} \cdot cos(\omega \cdot t + \varphi))
$$

y(s) contains Magnitude and Phase information. Really useful property – a single calculation gives

- Magnitude =  $Mag[y(s)],$
- Phase =  $arg[y(s)]$  (radians !)



**TEXAS INSTRUMENTS** 

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## **Transfer Functions: Bode Plots**

The transfer function is basically  $\mathsf{V}_{\mathsf{o}}(\mathsf{s})$  /  $\mathsf{V}_{\mathsf{l}}(\mathsf{s})$ 

- $H(s)$ ,  $G(s)$ ,  $Y(s)$  etc, etc,
- Calculated or Measured
- A function frequency
- Complex frequency gives Magnitude and Phase

Bode Plot, Magnitude and Phase versus frequency

- Frequency is on a Log scale
- $\bullet$  Magnitude in dB: 20 log (V $_{\rm O}\!{\left< \mathsf{V}_{\mathsf{O}}\!/\mathsf{V}_{\mathsf{I}} \right>}$
- Phase in deg:  $\theta_{IN} \theta_{O}$
- Can use straight line approximations (dotted)

#### **Note**

• Magnitude, Amplitude, Gain are equivalent









## **Transfer Functions: Zeros**





#### 厚 **Transfer Functions: Complex Conjugate Poles**

Complex Conjugate Poles: Resonance, Phase decreasing to -180° Q determines peak response

Gain rolls off at -40dB per decade above  $\omega_0$ Phase is:

- $0^\circ$  at LF
- -90 $^{\circ}$  at  $\omega_{0}$
- $-180^\circ$  at HF



$$
G(s) = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{s}{Q \cdot \omega_0} + \frac{s^2}{\omega_0^2}}
$$
 
$$
Q = \frac{R}{\sqrt{\frac{L}{C}}}
$$
 
$$
V_1 \cup \frac{C}{C} \cup \frac{C}{R}
$$

**TEXAS INSTRUMENTS** 

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### **Transfer Functions: Right Half Plane Zero**

 $G(s) =$ 

#### RHPZ:

• A characteristic of topologies which deliver energy to the output 180° out of phase with the energy taken from the input Flyback, Boost, Cuk, (CCM only).

RHPZ: (Right Half Plane Zero)

- Gain increasing Phase decreasing
- Almost impossible to compensate for this
- Must close the loop at frequencies  $<< \omega_z$

#### RHPZ is not an issue in Boost PFC

- They must close the loop at very low frequencies for other reasons, typ < 10 Hz .
- Controlled quantity is input current, not output current





#### **TEXAS INSTRUMENTS**

#### Ref 1

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#### • TI Information – Selective Disclosure



### **Control Systems: Variables**

Many SMPS use Duty Cycle (D) as the control variable  $V_{\text{OUIT}} = D \cdot V_{\text{IN}}$ 

• CCM, PSFB, Push-Pull

Sometimes D and  $F_{SW}$  are both used

- Mainly to improve efficiency
- Quasi Resonant, DCM converters
- Conversion ratios are unchanged

LLC uses Fsw as the control variable

• One of a large class of resonant converters

Hysteretic SMPS use Upper and Lower limits on VOUT

**Buck Converter** 

**Boost Converter** 

**Flyback Converter** 

$$
= \left| \frac{L_N \cdot f^2}{L_N \cdot f^2 + (f^2 - 1)(1 + j \cdot f \cdot L_N \cdot Q)} \right|
$$

14 Conversion factor is a function



#### 厚 **A Typical Control System:**

A typical analog SMPS control system looks something like this Ref 2: Ch6

- $K_{F_A}(s)^*$  Error Amplifier (transfer function as function of complex frequency)
- $K_{p_{M/M}}$  Pulse Width Modulator (A Constant)
- $K_{LC}(s)$  Output Filter
- $K_{FR}$  Feedback Potential Divider
- $G(s) = K_{PWM} * K_{LC}(s) =$  Control to Output gain
- $H(s) = K_{FB} * K_{FA}(s) =$  Output to Control gain
- Total loop response  $T(s) = G(s) * H(s)$



System measures the output, compares to the reference, makes an adjustment



## **Two Control Systems: VMC and CMC**

VMC:

• Error Amplifier controls Duty Cycle (D) directly

CMC:

- PCM (Peak Current Mode)
- ACM (Average Current Mode)
- Error Amplifier sets  $I_{DEM}$  (Current Demand) for inner loop. sometimes called 'COMP'
- Inner loop regulates the output current

Other control methods do exist – not covered here



#### E **Control Systems: Voltage Mode Control**

Error amplifier output  $V_{\rm C}$  controls D directly  $V_{\text{OUT}}$  drops  $\rightarrow$  V<sub>C</sub> increases  $\rightarrow$  D increases  $\rightarrow$  V<sub>OUT</sub> increases

Less noise sensitive than PCM – larger ramp Easy to implement Voltage Feed Forward Output Filter appears in the transfer function so

- Control loop bandwidth is lower than with CMC
- More difficult to stabilise than CMC
- Type 3 Compensation (more on this later)

Just because it's more difficult to stabilise doesn't mean that it is impossible to stabilise.  $17$  is the stabilise of the stabilise  $17$ 



#### 厚 **Control Systems: Current Mode Control**

Peak Current Mode – most common

Average Current Mode – used in some PFC stages

Error amplifier output  $V_c$  sets a current demand

Inner current loop forces the output current to equal the current demand.

 $V_{\text{OUT}}$  drops  $\rightarrow$  V<sub>C</sub> (I<sub>DEM</sub>) increases,  $I_{\text{OUT}}$  increases  $\rightarrow$  V<sub>OUT</sub> increases

Wider loop bandwidth and easier to stabilise than VMC

Cycle-by-Cycle over current protection

Sub-Harmonic instability, (PCM in CCM)

- Slope Compensation (added to  $V_{EAO}$ )
- Peak-to-Average ratio not constant distortion in PFC  $\frac{1}{8}$   $\frac{0.2}{0.8}$   $\frac{0.4}{0.8}$   $\frac{0.8}{18}$   $\frac{0.8}{0.8}$





#### 厚 **Control Systems: PCM Half Bridge instability**

Peak Current Mode control of half bridge is unstable Described in Ref 13

Voltage at centre point of  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  diverges from  $V_{\text{IN}}/2$ 

• This is an inherent instability

**Solutions** 

- Use VMC any half bridge controller
- Use duty cycle copy UCC28251
- Use Average current limit LM5039
- Modified CT circuit see article above



#### Ę **References**

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**End of Part 1**

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#### **Control of SMPS – a Refresher Part 2**

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### **Control to Output Transfer Function: G(s)**

- $G(s) = \frac{V_{OUT}}{V_C} = K_{PWM} * K_{LC}(s)$
- Buck Converter in Voltage Mode Control
- Output Inductor/Capacitor resonance
- Phase boost, zero of ESR and Cout
- Type 3 compensation needed (more later)
- Buck Converter in Peak Current Mode
- First order characteristic
- Phase boost, zero of ESR and Cout
- Type 2 compensation (more later)

• Ref 3



## **Control to Output Transfer Function: G(s)**



#### 厚 **Output to Control Transfer Function: H(s)**

This is the feedback system used to close the control loop We need

- 180deg phase shift at DC for negative feedback
- High gain at DC, for good regulation
- High loop bandwidth, for good transient response (except PFC)
- Adequate gain and phase margins, for stability PM > 45° at 0dB gain

Need to reduce gain to less than 1 before  $\approx$  fsw/10

- Prevent the control loop from 'seeing' the switching action
- Ideally gain dropping at -20dB per decade at the cross over
- Makes system less sensitive to component variations

Error Amplifier





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## **The Feedback Network: H(s)**

Three generic types of Compensation network

- Type 1, 1 pole at origin, no phase boost
- Type 2, 1 pole at origin, 1 zero, 1 HF pole,
- phase boost up to 90°
- Type 3, 1 pole at origin, 1 zero pair, 1 HF pole pair,
- phase boost up to 180°

The terms PI, PID are used in digital control systems

Similar but no direct correlation to the Type 1, 2, 3 classification used here.

#### Ref 3 VERY Highly Recommended

• TI Information – Selective Disclosure

#### Error Amplifier







### **Loop Response: Requirements for Stability**

Loop Stability: Remember: 0dB = gain of 1

- There is a 180 deg phase shift at DC
- System will oscillate (at the crossover frequency) if there is an ADDITIONAL 180° around the loop at the crossover frequency. Ref 4

For Stability

- Phase must be < 180° when the gain goes through 0dB
- Gain must be < 0dB when the phase goes through 180° Compensation network must be designed for
- Adequate gain and phase margins, for stability
- PM  $> 45^{\circ}$  at 0dB gain

Need to reduce gain to less than 0dB before  $\approx$  fsw/10

Metastable condition if gain pops up above 0dB To be avoided !



0dB crossover at 1kHz Phase Margin ≈ 76°



### **Loop Response: T(s) = H(s)G(s), Buck PCM**

E



#### E **Loop Response: T(s) = H(s)G(s), Buck VMC**





 $Mag$  (dB) Phase (deg)

100

• TI Information – Selective Disclosure



 $1 \times 10^5$ 

 $1 \times 10^4$ 

 $1 \times 10^3$ 

11

 $1 \times 10^{6}$ 

45 90 135

180

 $T(s)$ 



Reference + Error Amplifier in one IC Type 2 compensator shown here,

- 1 pole at origin,
- 1 zero,
- 1 HF pole, phase boost up to 90°

#### Ref 5

Ref 6 (VERY highly Recommended)

• Optocoupler has pole due to parasitic output capacitance  $C_{\Omega}$ 





High  $V_{\text{OUT}}$  ( $> \approx 36V$ ) or Low  $V_{\text{OUT}}$  ( $< \approx 3V$ )

• Connect LED to a fixed bias rail.

Optocoupler CTR has a wide part to part variation and is also a function of -

- LED current.
- Temperature,
- Age.

Perceived to be unreliable, but main issue is lifetime

Very useful for crossing an isolation barrier



#### F **Current Loop Stability:**

Measuring gain and phase of the current loop is difficult.

Fix an operating point (Constant  $I_{DEM}$ ), inject the signal in series with the CS resistor, measure the gain and phase vs frequency

However: Current loop stability is not normally a problem except

In CCM a fixed frequency current loop is unstable for  $D > 50\%$ , Sub Harmonic Oscillations

Operation at D slightly below 50% can be underdamped

Slope Compensation Ramp needed



#### Ref 9

## **Sub-Harmonic Oscillations: Instability**

D < 50%, perturbation in inductor current (dotted) dies away.

System becomes increasingly underdamped as D increases past 40%

D>50%, perturbation in inductor current does not die away. Current diverges. System is unstable

Characterised by large cycle to cycle variations

Green = Current Demand Signal Blue = steady state inductor current Red = perturbed inductor current

15



Ref 7

## **Sub-Harmonic Oscillations: Slope Compensation**



Response becomes increasingly underdamped as D approaches 50%

Green = Current Demand Signal + Slope Compensation Ramp Blue = steady state inductor current Red = perturbed inductor current



#### Ref 8

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### **Control of SMPS – a Refresher**

**End of Part 2**

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#### **Control of SMPS – a Refresher Part 3**

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## **Measuring the control loop:**



### **Measuring the control loop: Bode Plot**

Isolation transformer couples test signal into circuit

• Wide bandwidth – typ 100Hz to 100kHz

Signal injection location must be chosen carefully

- Low Z looking 'back' into the loop,  $Z_2(s)$
- High Z looking 'forward' around the loop,  $Z_1(s)$

$$
T(s) = M(s) * \frac{Z_1(s)}{Z_1(s) + Z_2(s)}
$$

Where T(s) is the true loop gain, M(s) is the measured loop gain  $Z_1(s)$  and  $Z_2(s)$  are difficult to quantify but if  $Z_1(s) \gg Z_2(s)$  then

 $T(s) \approx M(s)$ 





## **Measuring the control loop: Transient Response**



Fourier transform of a step waveform contains components at all frequencies.

Large amplitude Load change

- Typically 25% to 75% to 25% load steps
- 0% to 100% to 0% load steps are also used

• Load di/dt must be significantly faster than the loop response.

- Electronic Load step function
- Resistor with MOSFET switch

Signal amplitude can be 'buried' in noise

• Apply repeated transients and average the result



#### Ę **Measuring the control loop**

Formal relationship between Gain/Phase plot and Transient Response (LTI system)

Phase Margin can be estimated from the shape of the transient response

Plots here are normalised to a crossover at 1Hz

Underdamped transient response implies small phase margin

Loop stability can be estimated from a load transient test

#### Oscillation at crossover frequency of the loop (approx.)





#### Ref 11, PP342

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# **The Iceberg Analogy**

Most instability problems have nothing to do with classical control theory !

**Noise Pickup Non Linearity – insufficient control range/authority Over Current protections Input Filter Oscillations Problems with Remote Sensing Source Instability Load Instability Etc. etc**



**EXAS INSTRUMENTS** 

#### Ę **Control of SMPS: Summary**

Control theory is sometimes thought to be difficult to understand

- Complex Mathematics, Complex Frequency, Laplace Transform, Poles, Zeros etc etc
- An intuitive overview is possible without too much complexity

SMPS control

- Voltage Mode:
- Current Mode: Peak Current Mode, Average Current Mode

Loop Transfer Functions

- Control to Output: G(s), Output to Control: H(s), Complete Loop
- Loop Compensation: Type 1, Type 2, Type 3

**Testing** 

• Gain Phase Measurements (Bode Plot), Transient Tests, Evaluation of results.

References



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