Microprocessors in Signal Processing, Measurement and Control

edited by

SPYROS G. TZAFESTAS

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PREFACE

In recent years the LSI technology has witnessed a revolutionary development, and allowed substantial reductions in the size and cost of digital logic circuitry. Computer system building blocks have progressed from the level of discrete components to the level of complex ICs involving many logic circuits on a single "chip". The invention and wide applications of microprocessors have changed the philosophy of the signal processing, measurement and control engineering fields. The microprocessor-based digital signal processing systems and controllers have replaced the conventional ones based on standard analog and digital computing equipment. The first microprocessors and "on-, hip" computers have appeared towards the end of 71 beginning 72. Their evolution since then and the number of applications, in which they have been utilized, have both been extremely spectacular. New system concepts and hardware/software tools are steadily under development to support the microprocessor in its multiple and complex tasks.

The goal of this book is to provide a cohesive and well-balanced set of contributions dealing with important aspects and applications of microprocessors to signal processing, measurement and system control. The majority of contributions include sufficient review material and present rather complete treatments of the respective topics. Although an exhaustive presentation of all existing microprocessor-based applications in the signal processing, measurement and control field is not possible in a single volume, the reader can find here the major aspects, tools and techniques employed in most applications. An outline of the material contained in the book, along with a general introduction to microprocessors and their applications is given in chapter 1.

This book is certainly not intended to cover introductory aspects of microprocessors and the application fields dealt with The reader is assumed to have acquired some background know-

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ledge prior to reading the book. Of course each chapter is self-contained, and hence the reader can restrict his study to the chapters of his special interest without any particular difficulty. Since the book involves a blend of the experience of a large number of experts working in different environments, a multiplicity of approaches and angles of attack are offered which are of great value to those seeking for alternative designs and solutions.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their acceptance to offer some of their valuable experience for the book. Without their contribution this book would not have been possible.

Despite the variations in the organization and flavour of the particular chapters, I am convinced that students, scientists and engineers will find this volume a useful guide to current microprocessor-based modelling, signal processing, measurement, control system design, and automation techniques.

Patras 1983

Spyros G. Tzafestas

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viii CONTRIBUTORS

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CONTENTS

	Contributors	vii
	PART I GENERAL ASPECTS	
	Chapter 1 MICROPROCESSORS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS — OUTLINE OF THE BOOK S. G. Tzafestas	
Microproc Teaching	essor Capabilities essor Applications Control System Design Using Microprocessors f the Present Book	3 4 5 6 8 12
ar .	Chapter 2 * MICROCOMPUTER SYSTEMS IN REAL-TIME APPLICATIONS P. Civera, D. DelCorso and F. Gregoretti	;
Real-Time Real-Time	Processing Hardware Design Programming Environment ed Real-Time Systems s	13 15 20 27 30
	Chapter 3 HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ASPECTS OF CONTROL APPLICATIONS OF MICROPROCESSORS D. Tabak	
Introduct Hardware Software	Aspects	33 34 41

x	CONTENTS
Concluding Comments References	42
PART II SIGNAL PROCESSING	
Chapter 4 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIGITAL FILTER VIA THE SIGNAL PROCESSOR C. S. Chen	
3 3	
Introduction	4 7
Infinite-Impulse-Response (IIR) Filter Design	48
Finite-Impulse-Response (FIR) Filter Design	5 6 5 8
Digital Filter Realization Structure Digital Filter Implementation	65
Reference's	68
Appendix	71
Chapter 5	20
MICROCOMPUTER-BASED WAVEFORM ANALYZERS	340 ·
AND THEIR APPLICATIONS R. D. Jackson and E.J. Prendergast	
n. b. vackson and E.v. Trendergav	
Introduction	75
System Components	80
Signal Processing Algorithms	89
Applications	93
References	98
Chapter 6 MICROCOMPUTER-BASED INTERACTIVE	
IMAGE PROCESSING	
. F. M. Cady and R. M. Hodgson	
Introduction	99
Interactive Image Processing Systems A µP-Based Interactive Image Processing System	100 107
Advanced Microcomputer-Based Image Processing Systems	
Conclusion	118
Acknowledgements	118
References	118
Appendix	120

хi

189 190

	Chapter 7 STATE OBSERVER IMPLEMENTATION VIA MICROCOMPUTERS WITH APPLICATIONS N. K. Sinha	
	on Estimation Problem: Practical Considerations ter Implementation of State	121 122
	ers:Linear Noise-Free Case	124
	rvers for Noise-Contaminated Outputs	129
	for Nonlinear Systems	131 133
Conclusion	Simulation	133
References		137
	etails of Hardware and Software	138
	Chapter 8 STATE ESTIMATION USING MICROPROCESSORS FOR PROCESS SUPERVISION AND CONTROL A. Holmberg and J. Orava	
T = 4 1 4 !	*	
Introducti State-of-t	ve- ee	141 142
	mation Algorithms	143
Applicatio		148
Conclusion		156
References		157
	PART III MEASUREMENT	
	Chapter 9 MICROPROCESSOR-BASED MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS A. Sowiński	
Introducti	on	161
Structure	and Organization of µP-Based Systems	164
	ssors in Measurement Systems	171
The Future	,	187
*	Chapter 10	
	MICROCOMPUTERS IN NUCLEAR PLANT DATA	
	MEASUREMENT	
	H. Toffer	.0
		100
Introducti	on . ion of the Hanford N Reactor	189 190
w nescribe	TOR OT THE HARITOTA IN REACTOR	190

xii	CONTENTS
Discussion of Examples Microprocessor Based Evolution and Analysis System Linked Microprocessor-Minicomputer Data	192 193
Communications Network High Speed Data Processing for Control Room Displays References	196 200 204
PART IV CONTROLLERS	
Chapter 11 MICROPROCESSOR-BASED INDUSTRIAL CONTROLLERS G. A. Tendulkar	
Introduction The Application of Industrial Controllers Microprocessor Architectures Programmable Controllers Programmable Logic and Closed-Loop Controllers Architectural Convergence Conclusion References	207 207 211 212 221 227 228 229
Chapter 12 DIGITAL CONTROLLERS AND THEIR MICROPROCESSOR-BASED IMPLEMENTATION S. G. Tzafestas	,
Introduction Microprocessors and Microcontrollers Classical Digital Controllers Minimum-Variance and Self-Tuning Controllers Digital State Feedback Controllers Examples of Microprocessor -Based Controllers Concluding Remarks References	231 232 241 253 260 268 275 276
PART V APPLICATION TO CONTROL AND AUTOMATION	V
Chapter 13 SPEED CONTROL OF MOTOR DRIVES VIA MICROPROCESSORS F. Harashima	
Introduction	283

CONTENTS	хій
CONTENTS	

Basic Concept of Microprocessor-Based Speed Control System Application of Modern Control Theory DC Drive System Induction Motor Drive Synchronous Motor Drive Conclusion References	285 287 292 294 295 297
Chapter 14 MICROPROCESSOR ALGORITHM FOR THE CON' OF SCR MOTOR SYSTEMS J. B. Plant	TROL
Introduction Motor Speed Control Model Digital Speed Control Digital Position Controller Firing Angle Limitations Experimental Results References Appendices	299 302 307 314 315 317 319 320
Chapter 15 MICROPROCESSOR CONTROL OF PHASE-CONT CONVERTERS AND CYCLOCONVERTERS S. K. Tso	ROLLED
Introduction Review of Basic Principles Motivations for Microprocessor Control Possible Scope for Digital Phase Control Concluding Comments References	323 324 331 332 342 343
Chapter 16 INDUSTRIAL ROBOTS AND THEIR MICROCOMPUTER CONTROLS M. Bertino	
Introduction	345
Types of Industrial Robots	345
Path Control for Serial Link Manipulators	351
Hardware Structure of a Control Unit for a	
Serial-Link Manipulator with Six Degrees of Fr	eedom 356
Applications and Future Developments of Industrial Robots	7.01
References	361 364
STREET, SHIP IN THE TRANSPORT OF STREET	304

Chapter 17 MICROCOMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN POWER SYSTEM SUBSTATION AUTOMATION C. T. Nguyen, R. Grondin, A. St-Jacques and H.H. Le	
Background: Power System Substation Automation36Basic Considerations for Hardware Design37Microcomputer Applications37Conclusions38	67 68 71 73 83 84
Chapter 18 MICROCOMPUTERS IN THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY P.* Uronen	
Situation Today Typical Applications in the Pulp and Paper Industry Future Trends and Conclusion:	87 90 99 07 08
Chapter 19 THE MICROPROCESSOR IN RAILWAY CONTROL SYSTEMS S. Sone and I. Okumura	
Approved Applications of µPs in Railway Systems Novel Applications of µPs in Railway Systems 42	11 11 21 36
SUBJECT INDEX 4:	37

Microprocessors in Signal Processing, Measurement and Control

Part I GENERAL ASPECTS

CHAPTER 1

MICROPROCESSORS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS-OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

Microprocessors have already been recognized to be important tools for the electronic and system designer $\lceil 1-9 \rceil$. Microprocessor-based computing systems have shown a great influence on signal processing and control, similar to that of largescale digital computers in the decade of sixties. Their sucess is mainly due to the cost reduction and design flexibility increase they offer. After the introduction of the PDP-5 (1963) and PDP-8 (1965) minicomputers a steady reduction rate in the cost of signal-processing and computer-control has occured, (about 30 per cent per year) owing primarily to the improvements of semiconductor IC technology. The transition from PDP-8 (which is programmable mainly in machine and assembly language) to VAX-11 (a high-level language machine) needed 15 years, whereas analogous progress in microprocessors was made in less than half that time. The microcomputer offers a unique compactness and modularity in instrumentation, signal processing, and control, which makes now possible many new applications, that previously needed much more expensive dedicated computers. Actually, the application of microprocessors is limited more by the imagination of their users than by their technology. As more and more system designers are familiarized with the capabilities of microprocessors the number of new microprocessor-based applications increases very rapidly. It is remarkable that in only a few years we had a transition from the laboratory utilization of the microprocessor to a mass production and utilization of microprocessor based systems. Of course, in the early stages of the microprocessor revolution, the new technology has been used merely to replace TTL implemented systems, but presently an increasing number of products are surfaced which would be impractical without the microprocessors.

2. MICROPROCESSOR CAPABILITIES

Microprocessors are the result of the semiconductor industry effort to accomodate an ever-increasing number of transistors in a single integrated circuit, and can implement a given function with a smaller number of chips than older devices. They have replaced hardwired logic with programmed logic that can be placed into ROMs offering even more capability per chip. Any basic microprocessor module can be enriched with a great logic power by simply adding of few more IC's. The most important characteristics of today's microprocessor usage is not so much in replacing hardwired logic or the low-end minicomputers, as it is in a substantial shift in the philosophy of electronic design and in using them in the new applications where use of big computers is not economically justified. The major microprocessor disadvantage is its low speed. Compared to minis, the micros have smaller istruction repertory, fewer features, and weaker software support.

Compared to the hardwired logic, the microprocessor offers greater flexibility, since wired connections and SSI/MSI devices are being replaced by bits in memories. Thus, modifications, improvements, and product expansions, instead of requiring new hardware designs and/or replacing logic gates and interconnections, simply require reprogramming and substituting bits in memory. It is noted that, although microprocessors have in general low speed, quite fast real-time programs can be written especially for slow industrial applications (such as temperature sensing in a heating plant, reading synchro signals, etc). When higher speed requirements exist, for which the conventional single chip µP is not fast enough, one can use multi-chip microprocessors with bit sliced architectures, most of which are intended for microprogrammed applications.

Microcomputers can replace minis for controlling industrial processes, reducing the cost by a factor greater than two. Originally the microcomputers were scale-down versions of existing minicomputers. This allowed the utilization of the mini control software with nearly no change. Today many microcomputer systems are being designed from the beginning with unique properties.

The major advantages of microprocessor-based systems over their random logic counterparts are the following:

- (i) Lower manufacturing cost (60 to 20 percent of the TTL equivalents).
- (ii) Lower time and cost of original design and development.
- (iii) Faster production of new systems in closer corres-