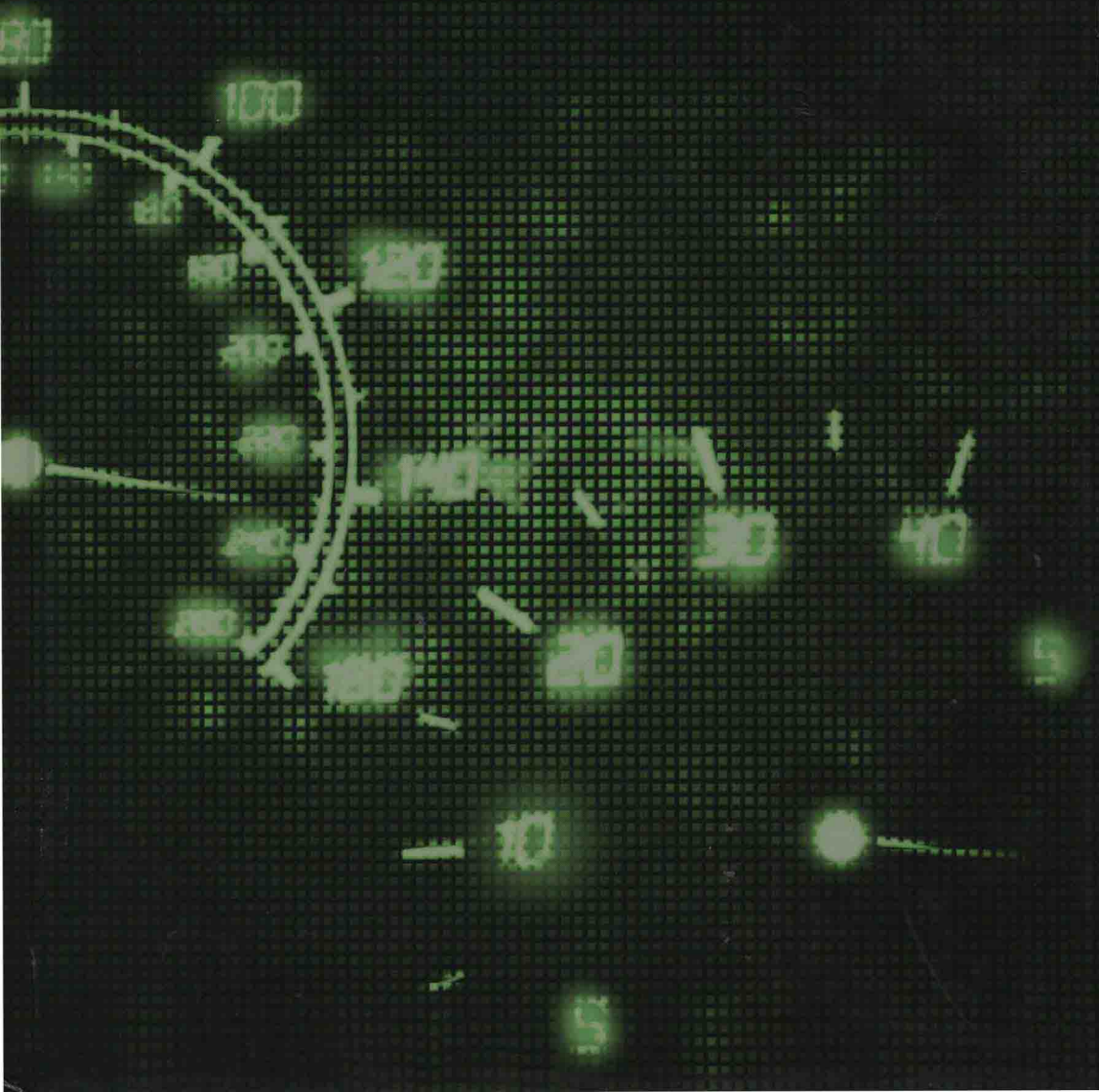


Walden University

# MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS AND SENSORS

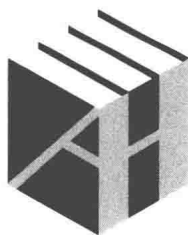
SECOND EDITION



# **Measurement Systems and Sensors**

**Second Edition**

Waldemar Nawrocki



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# Contents

Chapter 1	Computer-Based Measurement Systems	1
	1.1 Configuration and Structure of Measurement Systems	1
	1.2 Interface System	5
	1.2.1 Interface System Meaning	5
	1.2.2 Interface Bus	6
	1.2.3 Interface Functions	7
	1.3 Measurement Accuracy and Measurement System Dynamics	8
	1.3.1 Accuracy of Measurement Systems	8
	1.3.2 Measurement System Dynamics	10
	1.4 Interface Protection	15
	1.4.1 Interference in Measurement Instruments	15
	1.4.2 Interference Induced in Transmission Line	20
	Selected Bibliography	24
Chapter 2	Computers for Measurement Systems	25
	2.1 Functions of Computer in Measurement Systems	25
	2.2 Types of Computers for Measurement Systems	26
	2.3 Computer Architecture	28
	2.4 Universal Serial Bus	33
	2.5 IEEE-1394 Serial Bus	40
	Selected Bibliography	43
Chapter 3	Temperature Sensors	45
	3.1. International Temperature Scale (ITS-90)	45
	3.2 Resistance Sensors	47
	3.2.1 Platinum Sensors	47
	3.2.2 Thermistors	50
	3.3 Thermocouples	53
	3.4 Semiconductor Temperature Sensors	58
	References	64
Chapter 4	Stress, Pressure and Acceleration Sensors	65
	4.1 Mechanical Stresses and Pressure	65
	4.2 Resistance Strain Gauges	67
	4.3 Capacitive Gauges	71
	4.4 Piezoelectric Sensors	72
	4.5 Semiconductor Pressure Sensors	73
	4.6 Accelerometers and Gyroscopes	77
	4.6.1 Accelerometers	78

4.6.2	Gyroscopes	81
	References	85
	Selected Bibliography	85
Chapter 5	Signal Conditioners	87
5.1	Voltage and Current Amplifiers	88
5.2	Voltage Conditioners	93
5.3	Conditioners for Temperature Sensors	95
5.4	Conditioners for Strain Gauges and Piezoelectric Sensors	98
5.5	Conditioners for Linear Position Sensors	99
	References	101
Chapter 6	Digital-to-Analog and Analog-to-Digital Converters	103
6.1	Sampling and Quantizing	103
6.1.1	Sampling	103
6.1.2	Quantizing	106
6.2	Digital-to-Analog Converters	108
6.2.1	Parameters of Digital-to-Analog Converter	108
6.2.2	DACs with Resistor Dividers	110
6.2.3	DACs with PDM	115
6.2.4	Integrated DACs	117
6.2.5	Digital Controlled Potentiometers and Capacitors	119
6.3	Analog-to-Digital Converters	121
6.3.1	Analog-to-Digital Conversion Methods	121
6.3.2	Dual Slope Converters	122
6.3.3	Converters with Voltage-to-Frequency Conversion	127
6.3.4	A/D Converters with Successive Approximation Register	130
6.3.5	Flash Converters	132
6.3.6	Delta-Sigma A/D Converters	133
	References	135
	Selected Bibliography	135
Chapter 7	Measurement Systems with Serial Interface	137
7.1	Measurement Serial Interfaces – an Overview	137
7.2	RS-232 Serial Interface System	138
7.2.1	General Description	138
7.2.2	Transmission in the RS-232C Interface System	140
7.2.3	RS-232C Interface Bus	145
7.2.4	Current Loop in the RS-232C Interface System	148
7.2.5	Null Modem Measurement System with the RS-232C Interface	149

7.3	Programming of Measurement System with the RS-232C Interface	153
7.3.1	Programming of the Null Modem System	153
7.3.2	ScopView Program for the Metex Multimeter	154
7.3.3	Thermo Program for Temperature Measurements	158
7.4	Measurement System with the RS-232C Interface and Modem	163
7.4.1	Modem	163
7.4.2	System with the RS-232C Interface and Telephone Modem	167
7.4.3	Programs for Data Transmission Control in a Distributed Measurement System	170
7.5	Other Serial Interface Systems	174
7.5.1	RS-449 and RS-530 Serial Interface Systems	174
7.5.2	RS-449 and RS-530 Standards for Serial Interface Circuits	177
7.5.3	A comparison of RS serial interface standards	180
7.6	Smart Sensors Interfaces	183
7.6.1	Smart Sensors	183
7.6.2	PROFIBUS Interface System	184
7.6.3	MicroLAN Interface System	187
7.7	Power Line Communication for Measurements	190
7.7.1	General Description of PLC	190
7.7.2	Communication Protocols for PLC	193
7.7.3	Data Acquisition System for Electricity Meters	194
	References	195
Chapter 8	Wireless Measurement Systems	197
8.1	Wireless Transmission of Measurement Data	197
8.2	Radiomodem-Based Measurements Systems	198
8.2.1	Radio Channels and Radiomodems	198
8.2.2	Radiomodems in Measurement Systems	201
8.2.3	Measurement Systems with Radio Transmission: GSM-Based Versus Radiomodem-Based	202
8.2	Bluetooth Radio Link	204
8.3.1	ISM Frequency Bands for Short Range Communication	204
8.3.2	Bluetooth Standard – Basics	205
8.3.3	Applications of Bluetooth for Measures	209
8.4	IEEE-802.15.4 (ZigBee) Radio Link	213
8.4.1	General Information	213
8.4.2	IEEE 802.15.4 Transmission Protocols and Frames	214



8.4.3	ZigBee Network Topology and Devices	216
8.5	Other Wireless Transmission Systems	220
8.5.1	IrDA Infrared Link	220
8.5.2	WiFi Technology for Measurement Systems	224
8.5.3	Short Distance Wireless Transmission Systems – Comparison	226
	References	228
Chapter 9	Measurement Systems with GSM and LTE	231
9.1	Wireless Transmission of Measurement Data	231
9.2	Measurement Systems with GSM-Based Data Transmission	232
9.2.1	GSM Mobile Phone Network	232
9.2.2	GSM-Based Data Transmission	235
9.3	GSM-Based Distributed Measurement Systems	242
9.4	UMTS, UDPA and LTE Telecommunication Systems	248
9.4.1	Universal Mobile Telecommunication System	248
9.4.2	HSPA and LTE	252
9.5	Mobile Stations	255
9.6	Positioning Systems	257
9.6.1	GPS Satellite Positioning System	257
9.6.2	GLONASS Positioning System	261
9.6.3	Galileo System and the Regional Positioning Systems: BeiDou, IRNSS and QZSS	263
9.6.4	Positioning System with UMTS	265
9.6.5	Applications of Positioning Systems	267
	References	268
	Selected Bibliography	268
Chapter 10	Measurement Systems with IEEE-488 Interface	269
10.1	IEEE-488 (IEC-625) Parallel Interface Standard	269
10.1.1	Parallel Interfaces	269
10.1.2	IEEE-488 Basic Specifications and Applications	270
10.1.3	Controller of IEEE-488 System	272
10.1.4	IEEE-488 Interface Bus and Cable	278
10.1.5	IEEE-488 Interface Functions	282
10.2	IEEE-488 Interface Messages and their Transfer	284
10.2.1	Interface Message Types	284
10.2.2	Remote Messages	286
10.2.3	Local Messages	290
10.2.4	Message Transfer in Handshake Mode	291
10.3	Enhancements in Measurement Systems with IEEE-488 interface	292
10.3.1	Enhancing Transfer Rates in Measurement Systems: HS488 Protocol	292

10.3.2	Increasing the Number of Devices in Measurement Systems	295
10.3.3	Distributed Measurement Systems with IEEE-488 Interface	297
10.4	IEEE-488 interface Function State Diagrams	301
10.4.1	Execution of Interface Functions	301
10.4.2	State Diagrams of Interface Functions	302
References		317
Chapter 11	Crate and Modular Measurement Systems	319
11.1	CAMAC System	319
11.1.1	Crate and Modular Measurement Systems – an Overview	319
11.1.2	Organization of the CAMAC System	320
11.1.3	CAMAC Dataway	321
11.2	VXI Measurement System	322
11.2.1	General Specification	322
11.2.2	VXI Buses	324
11.3	PXI modular Measurement System	327
11.3.1	General Specification	327
11.3.2	PXI Bus	328
11.3.3	PXI System Modules	329
11.3.4	PXI-Express for Measurement Systems	331
11.3.5	PXI Measurement System Configuration	333
11.4	IEEE-1284 Interfaces in Measurement Systems	333
11.4.1	Bus of IEEE-1284 and Data Transmission	333
11.4.2	Measuring Systems with IEEE-1284	335
References		337
Chapter 12	LAN-Based Measurement Systems	339
12.1	Introduction	339
12.2	Ethernet Hardware	340
12.3	Ethernet Transfer Protocol	344
12.4	Ethernet-Based Measurement Systems	348
12.4.1	Ethernet-Based Measurement Systems with LAN/IEEE-488 Converters	348
12.4.2	Measurement Systems with LAN Interface	350
12.5	Internet-Based Measurement Systems and Systems with Embedded Web Servers	353
References		357
Selected Bibliography		358
Chapter 13	DAQ Boards and Virtual Instruments	359
13.1	Computer DAQ Boards	359

Measurement Systems and Sensors	X
13.1.1 Structure and Functions of a DAQ board	359
13.1.2 DAQ Board Specifications	361
13.1.3 Selected DAQ Board Model Specifications	363
13.2 Virtual Instruments	367
13.3 Programming of Measurement Systems and Virtual Instruments	379
13.3.1 Software Development in the LabVIEW Environment	370
13.3.2 Programming of LAN-based and Internet-Based Measurement Systems	372
13.3.3 Software Development in the TestPoint	375
References	376
Chapter 14 Measurement, Control and Diagnostic Systems in Vehicles	377
14.1 Electronics in Vehilcles	377
14.2 Data Transfer Systems	381
14.2.1 Data Transfer Buses – Classification	381
14.2.2 CAN Bus System	382
14.2.3 FlexRay Transfer System	388
14.2.4 Media Oriented Systems Transport	395
14.3 Diagnostics	403
14.4 Sensors for Vehicles	406
Selected Bibligraphy	410
Acronomys and Abbreviations	411
About the Author	415
Index	417

# Chapter 1

## Computer-Based Measurement Systems

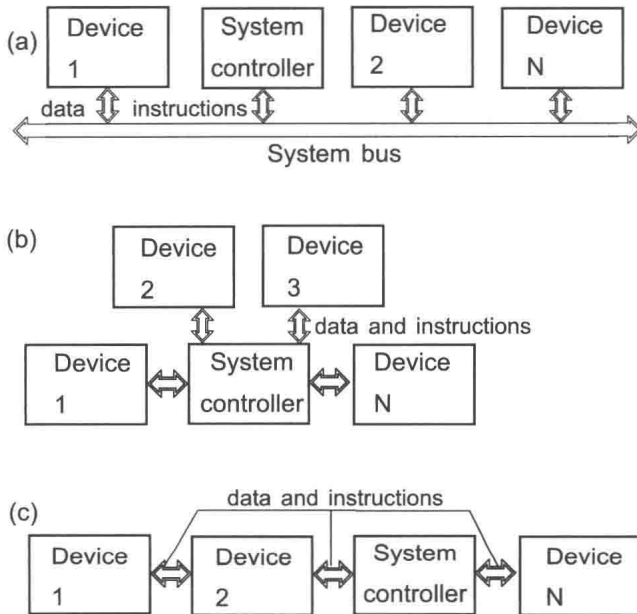
One of the components of measurement technology development is the development of measurement systems. By the measurement systems, we refer to a set of material and organizational resources, as well as software for information processing, aggregated in order to obtain, transmit, and process measuring data, and to display and store them. The measurement system is equipped with a personal computer (PC) or a microprocessor chip; its task is to control information flow in the system, to process measuring data, and sometimes to store them. The computer or the microprocessor chip is a system controller; that is a device managing the system. The measurement systems described in this book are exclusively digital systems. Measurement systems with the PC, called computer-based measurement systems, are of great importance. Considering the widespread use of PCs in both industrial and research measuring laboratories, the building of a computer measurement system usually does not imply the purchase of a separate computer, but allows the utilization of the existing ones. This is especially important and economically effective in the case of building up computer measurement systems for the realization of temporary measuring tasks. Separate classes of computer measurement systems are the simplest two-component systems, composed of one measuring instrument plus one computer as the system controller. It is self-evident that the possibility of applying an existing computer for setting up the simplest measurement system decreases construction expenses of such a system considerably.

### 1.1 CONFIGURATION AND STRUCTURE OF MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

An important problem in designing and operating the measurement system is the organization of information flow in the system. Two criteria are essential for this organization:

- The kind of transmission in the system: serial, bit-by-bit, or parallel, where the information is transmitted in the form of multibit words. According to this criterion, there are systems with serial interfaces and parallel interfaces.
- The mode of information exchange between system devices with regard to the connection configuration of instruments: linear (bus), star, or daisy chain (arranged in rows).

Measurement systems in the linear, star, or daisy chain configurations are shown in Figure 1.1. The linear configuration is used most often; in this configuration, the exchange of instructions passed between system devices is realized exclusively by the data bus of the system. The linear configuration is elastic because it makes change of the system structure readily possible by adding or disconnecting devices or by changing the placement of instruments in relation to other devices.



**Figure 1.1** Configuration of measurement system: (a) linear, (b) star, and (c) daisy chain.

The star configuration requires the number of multibit computer inputs equal to the number of devices in the system (except for the computer). An advantage of this configuration is the fact that it does not address the bus devices because they are connected to determined computer inputs. Alteration of the structure of such a system is difficult, and sometimes impossible, since the measurement system contains a greater number of instruments. Even less elastic is the daisy chain configuration, in which the exchange is possible only between neighboring instruments. Such configuration is sometimes used in the case of simple measurement systems

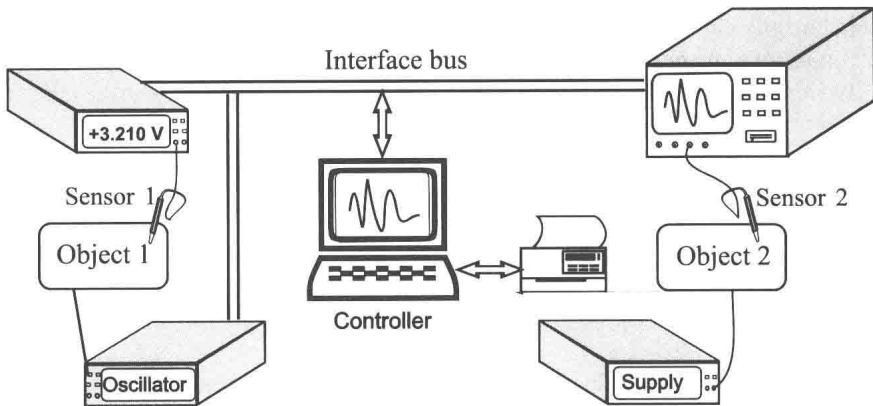
with the only one way of information flow. In discussing measurement system configurations, it must be remembered that a lot of measurement systems consist of two components only: the controller and the measurement instrument. The problem of system configuration thus does not appear.

The measurement system designed for measuring various physical quantities in the object consists of the following functional components:

- A sensor or a set of sensors of physical quantities. The sensor causes changes of a definite electric parameter in the function of the value of a measured quantity (e.g., the resistance alteration in the function of temperature).
- Measurement transducers, in which the electric parameter of the sensor is transformed into the direct voltage or the direct current (e.g., a transducer as the Wheatstone bridge with the bridge branch as resistance sensor with the electric voltage at the bridge output).
- Conditioners or circuits standardizing the level of signal from the measurement transducer to the range of the input voltage of the analog-to-digital converter (ADC).
- ADCs or digital measuring instruments containing such a converter; the task of ADCs is to convert analog into digital signals.
- Devices for visual display of measurement results in the form of the display field of a digital measurement instrument, the screen of a digital instrument (e.g., the digital oscilloscope or the frequency analyzer), or a computer monitor.
- A computer with its software and memory resources.
- Actuators or generators of test signals.
- Power supplies of the object, operating autonomously or under control (optional).

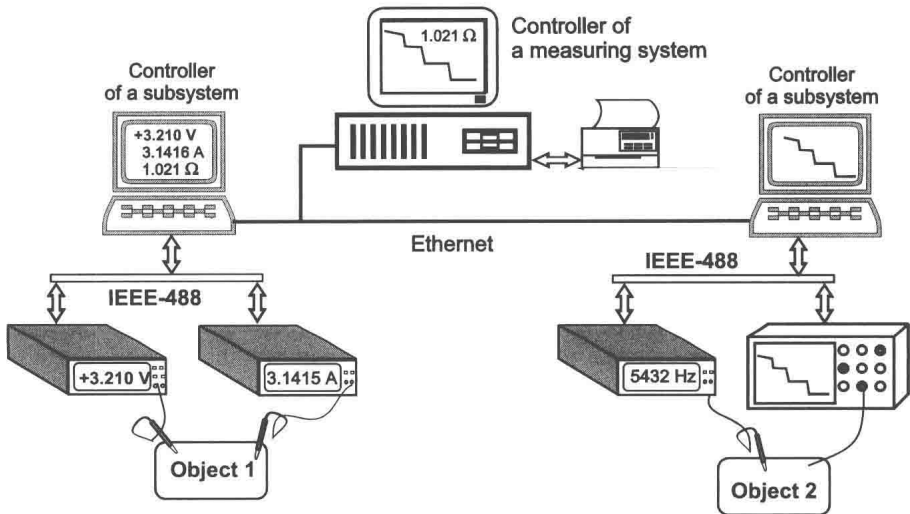
The flow-process diagram in a measurement system is shown in Figure 1.2. It is worth mentioning that the measurement system is often—particularly in industry—part of a control-measurement system. Measuring data is for controlling objects measured, for diagnosing the objects, and monitoring their state.

More complicated measurement systems can be constructed in the hierarchical structure. On the lowest level, there are measurement subsystems arranged to collect data from the object. Subsystems are situated on a separate area (e.g., in the manufacturing room or the laboratory). Data from such subsystems are sent to the main controller of the measurement system (see Figure 1.3). The main controller of the system not only receives initially processed measuring data, but it can also send commands relating to the execution of a measuring procedure or a set of commands for measurement instruments to subsystems. The main controller of the measurement system can also take advantage of memory resources, data display, and data storage devices.



**Figure 1.2** The flow-process diagram in a measurement system.

These devices would not be effectively used in subsystems. The PC, Mac, laptop, tablet or similar class computer—as the main controller of the measurement system—can be programmed for a synthesis of collected measuring data and for advanced processing, as well as for data presentation. Interface systems on different levels of the hierarchical measurement system can belong to different interface standards.



**Figure 1.3** The hierarchical structure of the measurement system.

In the example shown in Figure 1.3, each subsystem is composed in the standard of the IEEE-488 parallel interface. All subsystems are united into the system by means of the local area network (LAN) computer network, the Ethernet type with serial transmission. For the implementation of such a configuration, the

computer in a subsystem must be equipped with the IEEE-488 interface board and the Ethernet network board. Some interface standards (e.g., Profibus or VXI) make it possible to build up hierarchical systems in the frame of one interface system.

## **1.2 INTERFACE SYSTEM**

A generally applied criterion of the division of measurement systems is a kind of transmission of digital announcements in the system (e.g., data, addresses, and commands); in other words, serial transmission or parallel transmission. The interface system assures equipment and programmatic adjustment of devices attached to the bus. According to the criterion mentioned, measurement systems are divided into the following categories:

- Measurement systems with serial interface;
- Measurement systems with parallel interface.

The interface systems used most often in computer-based measurement systems are the following: the RS-232 serial interface and the IEEE-488 parallel interface (also called IEC-625, HPIB, or GPIB).

### **1.2.1 Interface System Meaning**

There is a notion of an interface system, as well as a notion of an interface only, which have a wider and a narrower sense, respectively. They are defined in standards. According to the standard, “interface is the coupling between a system considered and another system, or between devices of a system, through which information passes.” Interface in the narrower sense is only a matching-up circuit (e.g., matching-up signals of the TTL circuits to signals of the CMOS circuits), or adapting binary signals coded with voltage levels (e.g., logical 0 is 0V; logical 1 is 4.5V) for of binary signals coded with impulse frequency (e.g., logical 0 means 2,200 Hz; logical 1 means 1,200 Hz). The wider sense is given to the interface system, which according to the standard means, “the gathering of device-independent components—mechanical, electrical, and functional—necessary in the process of information exchange between devices.” Such gathering requires “cables, junctions, signal transmitters and signal receivers, interface functions with their logical description, the line signal, time relations as well as control rules.” Transmission protocols and control programs concerning system operation also belong to the interface system. In the common parlance, the notion of interface is often relevantly used instead of the notion of interface system. In this book, we will also take advantage of this abbreviation. It should be once again emphasized that the interface system describes (defines) the processing of only those signals that are transferred through an interface bus. Other signals in the



measurement system, including very essential input measuring signals, both analog and digital, are neither defined nor standardized by the interface standard.

### 1.2.2 Interface Bus

Signals transmitted through an interface bus bear the general name of interface messages. Interface messages are divided into data and instructions. The data transmitted is not only the result of measurement (measuring data), but also sets of instruments: measurement ranges, limit values for alarms, sets of power supply, sets of oscillators, the mode and the level of triggering oscilloscopes, and others. Instructions in the interface system are divided into commands and addresses.

Certainly, the organization of the interface bus depends on the kind of interface. Parallel interface buses are more complex. The lines of the parallel interface bus are divided into groups that are also called buses. A separate bus of the parallel interface is always the *data bus*. The data bus contains 4 lines (Centronics) to 64 lines (PXI). The *synchronization bus* contains lines assuring time coordination between the sending and the accepting of data. The *control bus* (or *interface management bus*) contains lines destined for transmission of control signals. Control signals in a measurement system are the signal of resetting, interrupt request signals, commands of measurement execution, commands of generating a set of signals (for a generator in the system), and others. The *address bus* destiny is defined by its name. Binary addresses are transmitted across this bus. The addresses are sent to these devices, which ought to execute commands; related commands are available on the control bus. Quicker addressing takes place when the number of lines in the address bus is equal to the number of instruments included in the system. In such a case, addressing is performed with the “1 from n” method. In cassette (crate) systems with the parallel interface, a bus for clock pulses is set up. Sometimes, one part of the bus is the local rail, the line of which connects only neighboring modules in the cassette, and thus, as opposed to other lines in the interface bus, they are not led to all devices in the system. For particular systems of the parallel interface, the organization of the interface bus may differ considerably from the organization described above. For example, in the CAMAC system there are two separate data buses, each with 24 lines. One CAMAC data bus is provided for recorded data, the other for readout data. However, in the IEEE-488 system, the data bus serves not only for data transmission, but for addresses transmission as well.

The bus of the serial interface can number two or more lines. The messages transmitted are organized according to careful rules and standards called communication protocols. The interface message frame contains both the receiver address and the data field; it also contains the field of control bits as well as redundant CRC bits for transmission validity check. The CAN and MicroLAN measuring-control systems have a similar data bus. In spite of a trivial opinion evaluating the number of lines of each serial interface to two, this bus can have anything from 2 to 35 lines, as in the RS-449 interface. They are mostly control