

DESIGN OF

# RF AND MICROWAVE AMPLIFIERS AND OSCILLATORS

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## Design of RF and Microwave Amplifiers and Oscillators

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# Design of RF and Microwave Amplifiers and Oscillators

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### To my wife, Hilda,

and

our sons, Albert, Dewald, and Willem

### **PREFACE**

In this book the design of radio-frequency and microwave amplifiers and oscillators is addressed. The focus is on iterative synthesis techniques. The design of small-signal, class A, and class B amplifiers is considered.

Because impedance-matching is a major part of amplifier design and the purpose is to cover amplifier design comprehensively, all the material in [1] is also included in this book. Where necessary, this material has been revised and extended. Upgraded and extended versions of the main computer programs provided as text listings in [1] are provided with this book on diskette, in both source code and executable format.

A main feature of this book is the introduction of a generalized approach to estimate the output power (1-dB compression point) of a linear amplifier without resorting to nonlinear analysis techniques. The small-signal model and four boundary lines on the dc \( \begin{align\*} \begin{align\*} \begin{align\*} \line{\text{disc}} & \text{disc} & \end{align\*} \) curves of each transistor are used in this approach. All the normal operations associated with the \( \begin{align\*} \begin{align\*} \line{\text{disc}} & \text{disc} & \end{align\*} \) cascading, changes in configuration) are also allowed with the proposed power parameters. The basic principle in this approach is that the output power of a transistor is mainly limited by clipping of the intrinsic current or voltage. Clipping (voltage clipping) has always been used in designing RF power amplifiers. Application of this principle at microwave frequencies was first illustrated in [2].

The purpose of the power parameter approach is not to exclude nonlinear analysis of the circuit (assuming that accurate nonlinear models are available), but to control the output power during the synthesis phase. However, it should be mentioned that if the theoretical harmonic and intermodulation performance of a circuit are not of interest, the results obtainable with the power parameter approach are usually adequate. Because of its accuracy, the power parameters can also be used to initialize the fundamental tone voltages in a harmonic balance simulator (class A, class AB, and class B stages).

The external load associated with any intrinsic load can be found easily by using the power parameter approach. With this capability in place, it is a simple matter to generate load-pull contours for any linear amplifier stage.

At the time [1] was published, amplifier design was considered to essentially reduce to the design of specialized impedance-matching networks. However, it was found that when more demanding amplifiers are designed (low input VSWR and low noise; high dynamic range; low output VSWR and high power), the performance could only be obtained by modifying the characteristics of the transistors used with frequency-selective resistive networks (feedback and/or loading). In doing this, the excess in capability (noise figure, gain) at the lower frequencies is exchanged for more desirable characteristics (stability, gain leveled in the passband, improved VSWRs, optimum noise/power and optimum match points closer to each other, ...) in the passband of interest. This class

of action will be referred to as device-modification.

Because of the desensitizing effect of the resistive networks added, it was found that amplifiers based on device-modification and impedance-matching are frequently first-timeright. It was also found that choosing the right transistors for an amplifier can be critical in this respect. While transistors may seem to be equivalent on superficial inspection, the performance obtainable during the device-modification stage may differ greatly.

The normal approach to deciding on the stability of an amplifier was also found to be inadequate in some cases. Small changes in some circuits can easily change them from inherently stable to potentially (or actually) unstable. Satisfactory results were obtained when the stability analysis was extended to include calculation of the well-known gain and phase margins used in feedback theory. Because the actual cause of the oscillations are usually the feedback loops introduced, it makes sense to investigate these loops in addition to calculating the usual "black-box" stability factors. Knowing that a loop is 1 dB away from oscillation also contains much more information than just knowing the k factor for a circuit.

The loop gain approach also leads directly to the design of RF and microwave oscillators. Knowing the loop gain, in addition to the other stability factors, provides a much clearer picture of the stability situation.

A major shortcoming in the regular approach to the design of oscillators is that only the negative resistance is considered during synthesis. Clearly, clipping of the voltage and current is as important as in the case of amplifiers. In the design approach proposed here, the loop gain is controlled with the load line presented to the transistor used. An immediate advantage of a well-behaved load line is that the main nonlinear effect in the oscillator will be  $g_m$  compression. Assuming an exponential saturation curve for the output power, the loop gain can then be controlled to maximize the output power of the oscillator. If low phase noise is required, the loop gain must be kept low in order to minimize upconversion of the flicker noise.

The optimum load termination for the transistor used in an oscillator can also be obtained by using the power parameter approach.

Impedance-matching by using "real-frequency" techniques is well established at this point in time. To be of real practical use at microwave frequencies, it is essential to design a matching network with the pads required for any lumped components in place. The transformation Q technique described here can easily be extended to provide this capability. The same approach can be used to design mixed lumped/distributed matching networks in which the lumped components are used to reduce the line lengths required.

Single-layer parallel plate capacitors and metal-insulator-metal (MIM) capacitors are frequently used in microwave matching networks. To properly allow for their effect during synthesis, their distributed nature should be understood. Accurate modeling of these capacitors is, therefore, also considered here.

The material in this book is organized as follows.

Analysis and characterization of RF and microwave circuits with Y-, Z-, T-, and S-parameters are considered in Chapter 1. Analysis by using flow diagrams is also considered. Characterization and analysis of the noise and the power performance of active circuits are considered in Chapter 2. Noise correlation matrices are introduced with the

Preface xvii

power parameter approach.

Radio-frequency components are considered in Chapter 3. Basic inductor, capacitor, and resistor models are considered, with the skin-effect and the proximity effect. The design of single-layer air-cored inductors, and inductors with magnetic cores, is investigated in detail. Coaxial cables and microstrip transmission lines are also considered in this chapter. Resonant circuits and the design of narrowband impedance-matching networks (L-, T-, and PI-sections) are investigated in Chapter 4. Coupled coils and conventional transformers are covered in Chapter 5. Transmission-line transformers are covered in Chapter 6. The design of RF power amplifiers is also considered in this chapter. Film resistors and single-layer parallel-plate capacitors are considered in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 is devoted to the design of wideband impedance-matching networks. Microwave lumped elements, and distributed equivalents for inductors and capacitors, are covered in Chapter 9, with the parasitic effects of microstrip discontinuities at the lower microwave frequencies (up to X-band). The design of RF and microwave amplifiers and oscillators is considered in Chapter 10. The design of cascade amplifiers, lossless feedback amplifiers, reflection amplifiers, and balanced amplifiers is considered in this chapter.

This book was prepared in camera-ready format and a massive amount of this work was done by my wife, Hilda. I would like to acknowledge her contributions to this book at this point. I would also like to acknowledge the significant contributions of the reviewer to this book. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Artech House team for their professional handling of this project.

Pieter L.D. Abrie Somerset West April 1999

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### **CONTENTS**

### **PREFACE**

# CHAPTER 1 CHARACTERIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF LINEAR CIRCUITS AT RF AND MICROWAVE FREQUENCIES

1.1	INTRODUCTION				
1.2	Y-PA	RAMETERS	1		
	1.2.1	The Indefinite Admittance Matrix	7		
1.3	Z-PA	RAMETERS	8		
1.4	TRANSMISSION PARAMETERS				
1.5	SCAT	TERING PARAMETERS	11		
	1.5.1 1.5.2	S-Parameter Definitions The Physical Meanings of the Normalized Incident and	12		
	1.5.3	Reflected Components of an N-Port	18		
	1.5.4	The Physical Interpretations of the Scattering Parameters Constraints Imposed on the Normalized Incident and Reflected	20		
	1.5.5	Components by the Terminations of an <i>N</i> -Port Derivation of Expressions for the Gain Ratios and Reflection	23		
		Parameters of a Two-Port	26		
		Signal Flow Graphs	31		
		The Indefinite S-Matrix	35		
	1.5.8	Extension of the Single-Frequency S-Parameter Definitions to the			
	1.50	Complex Frequency Plane	37		
	1.5.9	The state of the bossiess iv-1 of the bossies in th	40		
	1.5.10	Conversion of S-parameters to Other Parameters	44		
REFE:	RENCE	S	46		
SELE	CTED E	BIBLIOGRAPHY	46		

# CHAPTER 2 CHARACTERIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF ACTIVE CIRCUITS AT RF AND MICROWAVE FREQUENCIES

2.1	INTRODUCTION				
2.2	NOIS	E PARAMETERS	48		
	2.2.1	Modeling the Noise Contribution of a Two-Port with			
	222	Equivalent Circuits	48		
	2.2.2	Noise Correlation Matrices	55		
	2.2.3	Calculating the Noise Figure of a Cascade Network	58		
2.3	THE	OUTPUT POWER OF LINEAR AMPLIFIERS	60		
	2.3.1	Load-Line Considerations in Class A and Class B Amplifiers	61		
	2.3.2	Distortion in Linear Amplifiers	67		
	2.3.3	The Cripps Approach to Estimating the Maximum Output			
	224	Power Obtainable from a Transistor	73		
	2.3.4	Estimation of the Maximum Output Power of a Linear Network			
		by Using the Power Parameters	75		
REF	ERENCI	ES	92		
SELI	ECTED 1	BIBLIOGRAPHY	92		
CHA	PTER	3 RADIO-FREQUENCY COMPONENTS			
3.1	INTR	ODUCTION	93		
3.2	CAPA	ACITORS	94		
3.3	INDU	INDUCTORS			
	3.3.1	The Influence of Parasitic Capacitance on an Inductor	98		
	3.3.2	Low-Frequency Losses in Inductors	100		
	3.3.3	The Skin Effect	100		
	3.3.4	The Proximity Effect	103		
	3.3.5	Magnetic Materials	104		
	3.3.6	The Design of Single-Layer Solenoidal Coils	107		
	3.3.7	The Design of Inductors with Magnetic Cores	113		
3.4	TRAN	ISMISSION LINES	117		

Contents		13

	3.4.2	Coaxial Cables Microstrip Transmission Lines Fwisted Pairs	117 118 122		
REFE	RENCES		123		
SELE	CTED BI	BLIOGRAPHY	124		
СНА	PTER 4	NARROWBAND IMPEDANCE-MATCHING WITH LC NETWORKS			
4.1	INTRO	DUCTION	125		
4.2	PARAL	LEL RESONANCE	126		
4.3	SERIES	RESONANCE	131		
4.4	L-SECTIONS				
4.5	PI-SEC	TIONS AND T-SECTIONS	138		
		Γhe PI-Section Γhe T-Section	139 142		
4.6		ESIGN OF PI-SECTIONS AND T-SECTIONS WITH LEX TERMINATIONS	143		
4.7	FOUR-	ELEMENT MATCHING NETWORKS	146		
4.8		ILATION OF THE INSERTION LOSS OF AN LC ANCE-MATCHING NETWORK	147		
4.9	CALCU NETWO	JLATION OF THE BANDWIDTH OF CASCADED LC DRKS	149		
SELE	CTED BI	BLIOGRAPHY	150		
СНА	PTER 5	COUPLED COILS AND TRANSFORMERS			
5.1	INTRO	DUCTION	151		
5.2	THE ID	EAL TRANSFORMER	151		

Design of	of RF	and	Microwave	Amplifie	ers and	Oscillators
-----------	-------	-----	-----------	----------	---------	-------------

X

	EQUIVALENT CIRCUITS FOR PRACTICAL TRANSFORMERS			
5.4	WIDEBAND IMPEDANCE MATCHING WITH TRANSFORMERS			
5.5	SINGLE-TUNED TRANSFORMERS			
5.6	TAPPED COILS	159		
5.7	PARALLEL DOUBLE-TUNED TRANSFORMERS	166		
5.8	SERIES DOUBLE-TUNED TRANSFORMERS	172		
5.9	MEASUREMENT OF THE COUPLING FACTOR OF A TRANSFORMER	175		
	<ul> <li>5.9.1 Measurement of the Coupling Factor by Short-Circuiting the Secondary Winding</li> <li>5.9.2 Measurement of the Coupling Factor by Measuring the</li> </ul>	175		
	Open-Circuit Voltage Gain  5.9.3 Deriving the Coupling Factor from S-Parameters Measurements	176 s 176		
REFE	RENCES	177		
СНА	PTER 6 TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMERS			
6.1	INTRODUCTION	179		
6.1	INTRODUCTION  TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMER CONFIGURATIONS	179 181		
6.2	TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMER CONFIGURATIONS	181		
6.2 6.3	TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMER CONFIGURATIONS  ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMERS  DESIGN OF TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMERS  6.4.1 Determining the Optimum Characteristic Impedance and Diameter of the Transmission Line to be Used 6.4.2 Determining the Minimum Value of the Magnetizing Inductance of the Transformer	181 188 196 196		
6.2 6.3	TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMER CONFIGURATIONS  ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMERS  DESIGN OF TRANSMISSION-LINE TRANSFORMERS  6.4.1 Determining the Optimum Characteristic Impedance and Diameter of the Transmission Line to be Used 6.4.2 Determining the Minimum Value of the Magnetizing	181 188 196 196		

Contents	XI

.

6.5	CONSIDERATIONS APPLYING TO RF POWER AMPLIFIERS				
REFE	ERENCE	ES	215		
SELE	ECTED I	BIBLIOGRAPHY	216		
СНА	PTER	7 FILM RESISTORS AND SINGLE-LAYER PARALLEL-PLATE CAPACITORS			
7.1	INTR	ODUCTION	217		
7.2	FILM	RESISTORS	219		
7.3	SING	LE-LAYER PARALLEL-PLATE CAPACITORS	220		
	7.3.1 7.3.2 7.3.3	Parallel-Plate Capacitors on a Ground Plane Parallel-Plate Capacitors Used as Series Stubs Series Connected Parallel-Plate Capacitors	223 224 226		
REFI	ERENCE	ES	236		
СНА	PTER	8 THE DESIGN OF WIDEBAND IMPEDANCE-MATCHING NETWORKS			
8.1	INTR	ODUCTION	239		
8.2		FITTING AN IMPEDANCE OR ADMITTANCE FUNCTION TO A SET OF IMPEDANCE VERSUS FREQUENCY COORDINATES			
8.3	THE A	ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO IMPEDANCE MATCHING	246		
	8.3.1 8.3.2 8.3.3	Darlington Synthesis of Impedance-Matching Networks LC Transformers The Gain-Bandwidth Constraints Imposed by Simple RC and	248 253		
	8.3.4 8.3.5	RL Loads Direct Synthesis of Impedance-Matching Networks When the Load (or Source) Is Reactive Synthesis of Networks for Matching a Reactive Load to a Purely	<ul><li>256</li><li>258</li></ul>		
	8.3.6	Resistive or a Reactive Source by Using the Principle of Parasitic Absorption The Analytical Approach to Designing Commensurate Distributed Impedance-Matching Networks	263 267		
		Distributed imposition in interests	207		

8.4	4 THE ITERATIVE DESIGN OF IMPEDANCE-MATCHING NETWORKS			
	8.4.1	The Line-Segment Approach to Matching a Complex Load to a	273	
		Resistive Source	276	
	8.4.2	The Reflection Coefficient Approach to Solving Double-Matching Problems	284	
	8.4.3	The Transformation- $Q$ Approach to the Design of Impedance-Matching Networks	291	
8.5	THE I	DESIGN OF RLC IMPEDANCE-MATCHING NETWORKS	311	
REF	ERENCE	ES	317	
SELI	ECTED I	BIBLIOGRAPHY	318	
CHA	APTER	9 MICROWAVE LUMPED ELEMENTS, DISTRIBUT	ED	
		EQUIVALENTS, AND MICROSTRIP PARASITICS	LD	
9.1	INTRO	DDUCTION	321	
9.2	MICR	OWAVE RESISTORS	322	
9.3	THE L USED	IMITATIONS OF A SERIES TRANSMISSION LINE TO REPLACE A LUMPED ELEMENT	322	
9.4	LUMP	ED MICROWAVE INDUCTORS	325	
9.5	LUMP	ED MICROWAVE CAPACITORS	331	
9.6	DISTR AND (	IBUTED EQUIVALENTS FOR SHUNT INDUCTORS CAPACITORS	333	
9.7	A TRA LOW-I	NSMISSION LINE EQUIVALENT FOR A SYMMETRIC PASS T-SECTION OR PI-SECTION	338	
9.8	MICRO MICRO	OSTRIP DISCONTINUITY EFFECTS AT THE LOWER DWAVE FREQUENCIES	345	
9.9		MPENSATION TECHNIQUE FOR MICROSTRIP ONTINUITIES	353	
REFE	RENCE	S	356	