

The Positive Side of Filters

Figure 3. CNR layout.



maintained isolated from the others, and of a specific periodically repeating *routing procedure*, operations involving the packets of charge stored in the cells. The basic operations consist in applying a charge packet to a storage cell such that the packet's size is proportional to a given positive voltage amplitude (*injection*), in splitting the charge packet of a cell into positive components and transferring these parts into distinct cells previously empty (*splitting and transfer*), in combining charge packets from different cells and transferring them simultaneously into the same cell (*addition*) and in emptying a cell by removing its charge packet from the network while generating a voltage amplitude proportional to the size of the extracted packet (*extraction*).

From the above follows that every CRN can be completely described by a directed graph whose nodes represent cells and whose branches indicate routes of charge transfer between cells. Each directed branch has a positive weight value which indicates the fraction of the charge of the starting node transferred along that route, so that the impulse response of the CRN is positive.

Using this basic mechanism, these devices can perform a wide range of electronic functions including image sensing, data storage, signal processing or logic operations. CRNs offer the possibility of achieving discrete-time signal processing on an MOS integrated circuit chip with the advantage of lighter weight, smaller size, lower power consumption and improved reliability (with respect to an equivalent digital implementation). Moreover, they can perform many sampled-data filtering functions directly in the analog domain. In fact, CRNs are inherently analog, and as such they are ideally suited to a number of sampled data signal processing functions. In a sense, CRNs combine the features of digital and analog techniques: like digital filters, CRNs are controlled by a master clock and their characteristic is as stable as the master oscillator but the requirement for analog-to-digital conversion is eliminated and all functions are performed in the analog domain. It is worth noting that the celebrated CCD devices are nothing but CRNs with a single route!

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CRNs, the paper shows that the answer is positive. In fact, when considering 2-phase CRNs, an arbitrary filter of order n can be realized as the difference of an N_c -cell positive filter and a 5-cell one, for some $N_c > n$. This answer bears another question: *Can one give some a priori bound for the number $5 + N_c$ of nodes (cells) needed to implement such positive filters?*

This question is far from trivial; in fact, it may well be the case that N_c must be much larger than the filter order n .

In order to gain partial insight into this problem, the case of first and second order filters is initially considered. Then, the case of a filter of order n , whose system function $H(z)$ has simple poles, is tackled by decomposing it into a sum of first and second order filters so that an *a priori* upper bound for N_c is given. In the case of 2-phase CRNs, this upper bound is given by the formula

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$$N_c = 3 + 2 \left(n + N_2 + \sum_{i \geq 3} (i - 2)N_i \right)$$

where N_2 is the sum of the number of negative real poles and of nonnegative real poles with negative residues of $H(z)$, N_3 is the number of pairs of complex poles of $H(z)$ belonging to \mathcal{P}_3 , and $N_i (i > 3)$ is the number of pairs of complex poles of $H(z)$ belonging to the set

$$\mathcal{P}_i / \bigcup_{j=3}^{i-1} \mathcal{P}_j$$

where \mathcal{P}_i , with $i \geq 3$, denotes the set of points in the complex plane that lie in

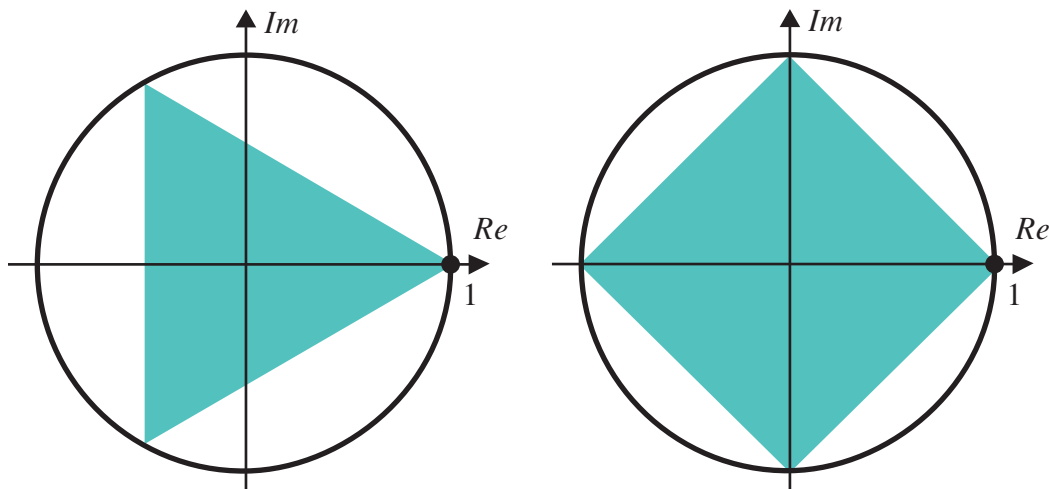



Figure 4. The sets \mathcal{P}_3 and \mathcal{P}_4 .


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the interior of the regular polygon with i edges having one vertex at the point $1 + j0$ and inscribed in the unit disk centered at the origin of the complex plane.

Furthermore, the paper provides an introductory description of CRN behavior and implementation; and, on the basis of its results, a design procedure to implement an arbitrary filter as the difference of two CRNs is given.

As a final comment, the result of this paper may be used for example to

implement optical filters in which the signals are modulated as intensity variations on optical carriers whose coherence time is less than the shortest relevant time delay in the system. In fact, in this case, the signals are positive and add on an intensity basis so that only positive filters can be implemented.

What else? Well, the moral of the story is... *positive filters make the difference!*



Luca Benvenuti was born in Rome, Italy, on February 8, 1966. He received the “Laurea” degree in electrical engineering (*summa cum laude*) and the Ph.D. degree in systems engineering from the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, Rome, Italy, in 1992 and 1995, respectively. He was a visiting graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1995. In 1997 he was scientific consultant for Magneti Marelli, from 1997 to 1999 he had a postdoctoral position at the Department of Electrical Engineering, University of L’Aquila, L’Aquila, Italy, and from 1997 to 2000 he was scientific consultant at PARADES (Project on Advanced Research on Architectures and Design of Electronic Systems), a research laboratory supported by Cadence Design Systems, Magneti Marelli, and STMicroelectronics. He is currently assistant professor at the Department of Computer and System Science, University of Rome “La Sapienza”, Rome, Italy.



Lorenzo Farina was born in Rome, Italy, on October 3, 1963. He received the “Laurea” degree in electrical engineering (*summa cum laude*) and the Ph.D. degree in systems engineering from the University of Rome, “La Sapienza”, Rome, Italy, in 1992 and 1997, respectively. He was scientific consultant at the Interdepartmental Research Centre for Environmental Systems and Information Analysis, at the Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy, in 1993. He was the project co-ordinator at Tecnobionica S.p.A., in the field of remote monitoring of patients with heart diseases, in 1995, and held a visiting position at the Research School of Information Sciences and Engineering, the Australian National University in 1997. Since 1996 he has been with the Department of Computer and Systems Science, the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, where he is currently associate professor of modeling and simulation. He is co-author of the book *Positive Linear Systems: Theory and Applications* with S. Rinaldi, Series on Pure and Applied Mathematics, Wiley-Interscience, New York, 2000.



Brian D. O. Anderson was born in Sydney, Australia, and received his undergraduate education at the University of Sydney, with majors in pure mathematics and electrical engineering. He subsequently obtained the Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University. Following completion of his education, he worked in industry in Silicon Valley and served as a faculty member in the Department of Electrical Engineering at Stanford. He was professor of electrical engineering at the University of Newcastle, Australia from 1967 to 1981 and is now professor of systems engineering at the Australian National University and director of the Research School of Information Sciences and Engineering. His interests are in control and signal processing. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society, the Australian Academy of Science, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, and an Honorary Fellow of the Institution of Engineers, Australia. He holds doctorates (*honoris causa*) from the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zürich, University of Sydney and University of Melbourne. He served a term as president of the International Federation of Automatic Control from 1990 to 1993 and is currently president of the Australian Academy of Science. His awards include the IEEE Control Systems Award of 1997.