OSCILLATORS

By Edgar Sánchez-Sinencio

- Oscillator is a system that is able to produce independently bounded and permanent oscillations of at least one of the variables that describe it.

- Types of Oscillators:

- Periodic. This oscillator has an spectrum consisting of a fundamental frequency plus and infinite number of harmonics.
- Pseudo-periodic. The spectrum consists of more than one frequencies not related to each other.
- Chaotic. The spectrum of the response is flat. That is, it contains frequency components of all frequencies.

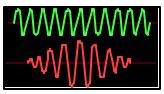
For sinusoidal oscillators a figure of merit is the distortion which is characterized by the Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)

- Oscillator Implementations
  - Ring Oscillators
  - LC Tuned
  - Crystal
  - Relaxation
  - Bandpass Filter- based
  - Quadrature
  - YIG Oscillators
  - Dielectric Resonance Oscillators

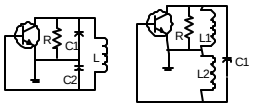
- An oscillator consists of three main components:
  An active device that acts as an amplifier and
  a feedback network to provide positive feedback in the system, and
  a non-linear control mechanism to stabilize the amplitude

- Design Specs
  - Low Noise
  - High Efficiency
  - Temperature Stability
  - Bandwidth
  - Linear and Wideband Tunability
  - Low Cost
  - Reliability

SINUSOIDAL OSCILLATORS



There are a number of circuit implementations of sinusoidal oscillators. In traditional communication circuits oscillators use one transistor, R's, C's and sometimes inductors. These filters were often used in RF circuits. Current RF oscillators used either ring oscillators or LC tuned oscillators. The last one consists of differential pairs and inductor(s) and capacitor(s)



In these notes we will first focus more on oscillators based on *state-variable structures* (SVS). We will discuss several implementations and the design procedures.

SINUSOIDAL OSCILLATORS

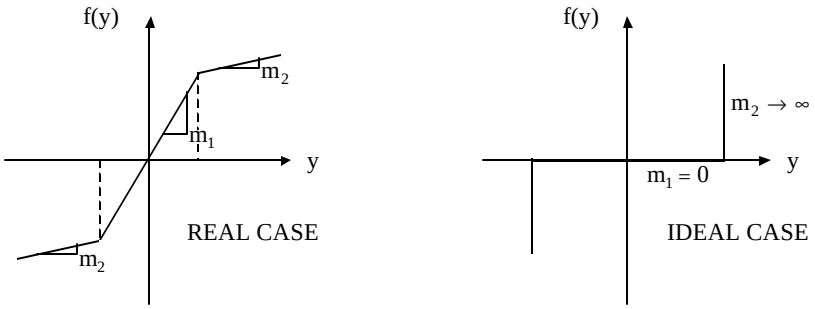
A sinusoidal oscillator is composed of:

1. A linear circuit that sets the oscillation frequency.
2. An active element that gains power at the frequency of oscillation.
3. A nonlinear mechanism to stabilize the amplitude.

Nonlinear Mechanism

- Static, when its input-output characteristic is fixed in time, as in a hard limiting device or an amplifier nonlinear gain.
- Dynamic, when its characteristic changes in time as in an AGC.

Examples of Nonlinear (static) Characteristics



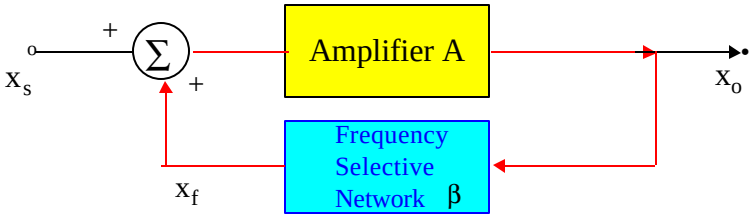
There are a number of topologies yielding sinusoidal oscillators. In our discussion we will first present two popular types in frequency ranges below hundreds of MHz:

i) **Quadrature Oscillator**

ii) **Bandpass - based**

OSCILLATORS

Fundamentals. Linear Aspects: Oscillation conditions.

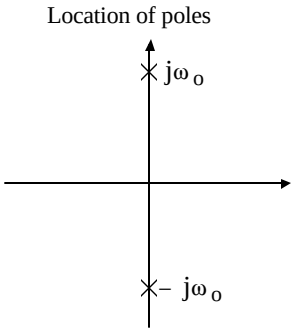


$$A_f = \frac{x_o}{} = \frac{A}{} = \frac{A(s)}{}$$

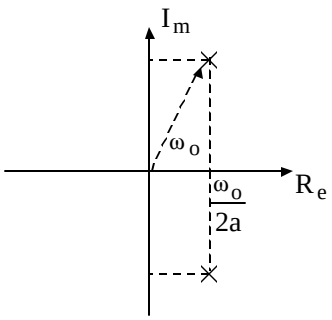
Barkhausen Criteria

Note that for the circuit to oscillate at one frequency the oscillation criterion should be satisfied at one frequency only; otherwise the resulting waveform will not be a simple sinusoid.

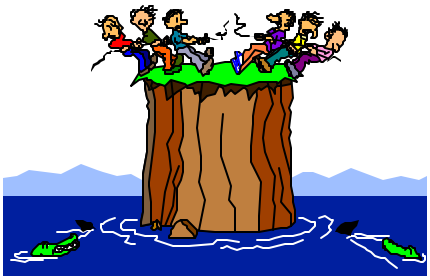
Need of Nonlinear Amplitude Control



Not practical
why?

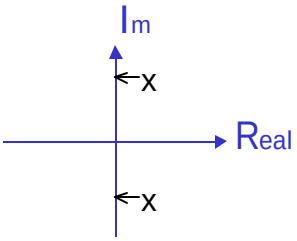


Practical.
How do you push the poles into the jω axis?



In the ideal case this is easy to design, but in the real case there a lot of system parameters that can change the poles due to their physical characteristics.

Therefore, the poles should not lie on the imaginary axis. One should design the poles so that they lie in the right half of the s-plane. This creates positive feedback and guarantees that the circuit will oscillate. How far should we place the poles ?

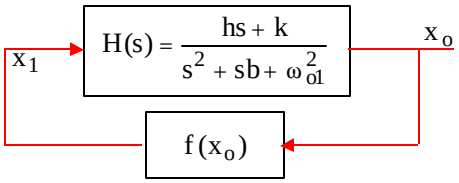


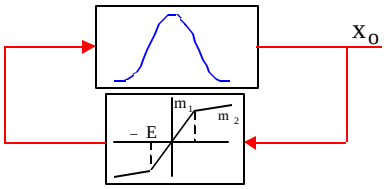
Oscillation Criterion

$$L(j\omega_o) \triangleq A(j\omega_o)\,\beta(j\omega_o) = 1$$

At ω_o the phase of $L(j\omega_o)$ should be zero. This is known as the Barkhausen Criterion .

Next we describe the BP - based oscillator:



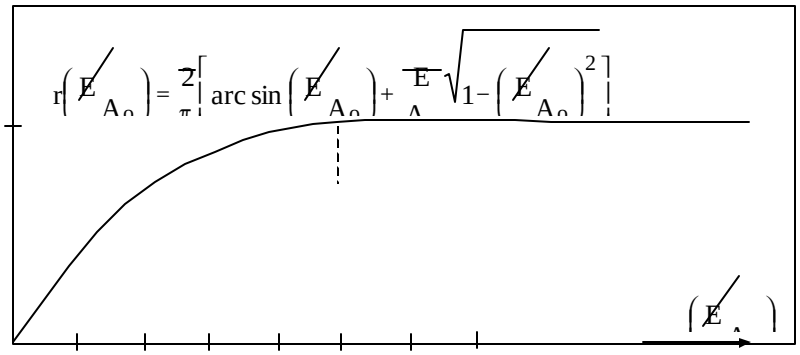


It can be shown that using the describing function the relation between input and output of a nonlinear device yields:

$$\frac{x_1(t)}{x_o(t)} = \frac{a\sin\omega t}{A_o\sin\omega t} = m_2 + (m_1 - m_2)r\left(\frac{E}{A_o}\right) = N(A_o)$$

Then we solve:

$$\frac{hs + k}{s^2 + sb + \omega_{o1}^2} = \frac{1}{N(A_o)}$$



Which yields:

$$s^2 + s[b - hN(A_o)] + [\omega_{o1}^2 - kN(A_o)] = 0$$

For the steady state $s = j\omega$

$$\omega_o^2 = \omega_{o1}^2 - kN(A_o)$$

and

$$b = hN(A_o) \quad \text{or} \quad A_o = N^{-1}\left(\frac{b}{h}\right)$$

The stability condition is imposed by making that the roots of the system move towards the left half complex plane if the oscillation amplitude increases above A_o, and vice versa

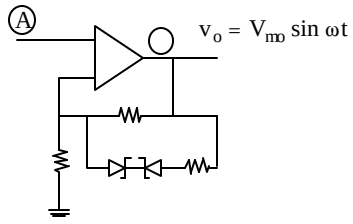
$$\frac{d}{dA_o}[b - hN(A_o)] > 0$$

The limit cycle stability conditions are

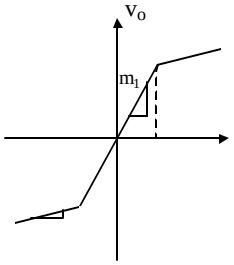
$$h(m_1 - m_2) > 0$$

$$h > b > 0$$

Nonlinear Amplifier Gain



$v_o = V_{mo} \sin \omega t$



$$m_1 = 1 + \frac{R_b}{R_a} = \frac{v_o}{v_i}$$

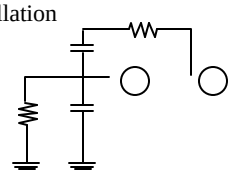
$$m_2 = \frac{\Delta v_o}{\Delta v_i} = 1 + \frac{R_b R_c}{R_b + R_c}$$

$$\frac{V_{mo}}{V_{mi}} = m_1 \qquad (V_{ma} < \delta)$$

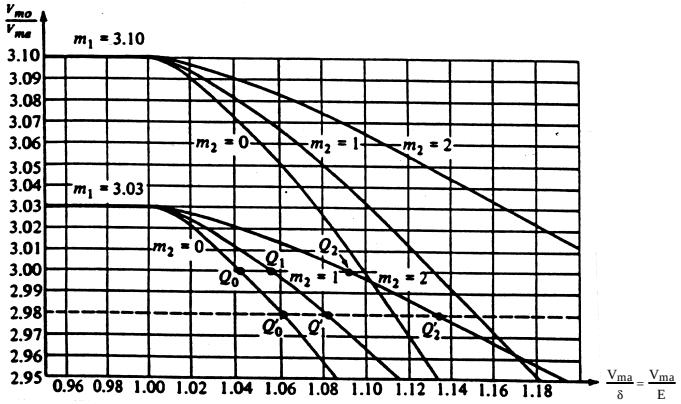
$$= m_2 + \frac{2}{\pi}(m_1 - m_2)\left[\sin^{-1}\left(\frac{\delta}{V_{ma}}\right) + \left(\frac{\delta}{V_{ma}}\right)\sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{\delta}{V_{ma}}\right)^2}\right] \qquad (V_{ma} > \delta).$$

Wien-Bridge Oscillator

For oscillation add:



$$L(s) = \frac{\left(1 + \frac{R_b}{R_a}\right)\frac{s}{RC}}{s^2 + \frac{3s}{RC} + \frac{1}{(RC)^2}} = \frac{hs}{s^2 + bs + \omega_{o1}^2}$$

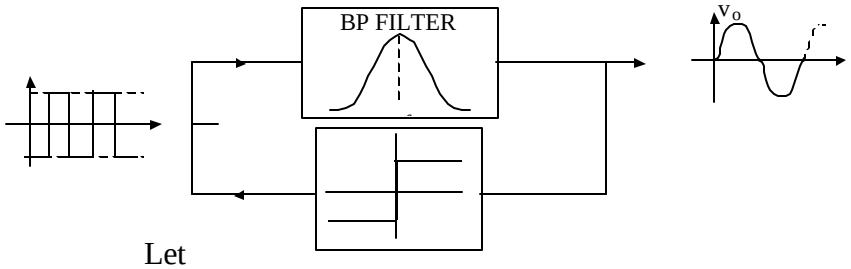


The gain at the fundamental frequency

Oscillations continue growing until the gain at the fundamental frequency is reduced to 3 by the action of the m_2 region. When the steady state is reached, the fundamental component of the output is $v_{o_f} = V_{mo} \sin \omega_o t$.

Note that for $m_1 = 3.03$, operation stabilizes at Q_o, if $m_2 = 0$ (i.e., $V_{ma}/E = 1.04$); at the point Q_1 if $m_2 = 1$. The larger m_2 the less is the distortion.

BP Based Oscillator



Let

$$H_{BP}(s) = \frac{K_1 s}{s^2 + \frac{\omega_o}{Q} s + \omega_o^2}$$

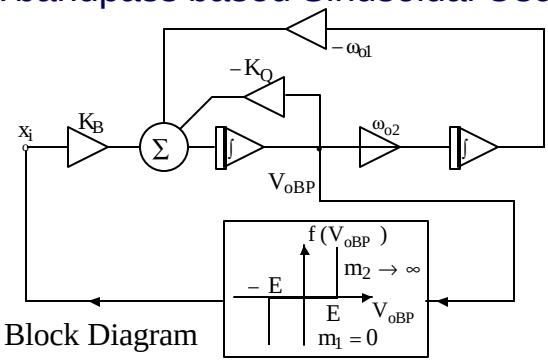
$$\left(s^2 + \frac{\omega_o}{Q} s + \omega_o^2\right) D(s) = s^2 + \frac{\omega_o}{Q} s + \omega_o^2 - KK_1 S$$

Characteristic Equation

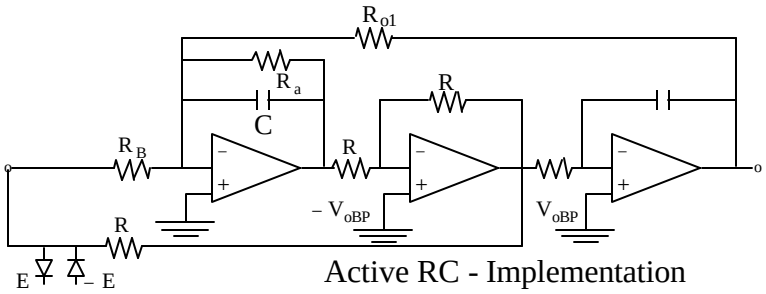
$$s^2 - s\left(KK_1 - \frac{\omega_o}{Q}\right) + \omega_o^2$$

$KK_1 > \frac{\omega_o}{Q}$ i.e. positive feedback

A bandpass based Sinusoidal Oscillator

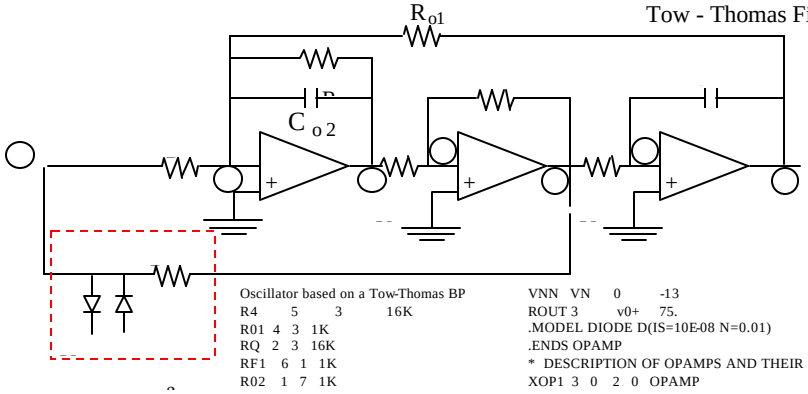


Block Diagram

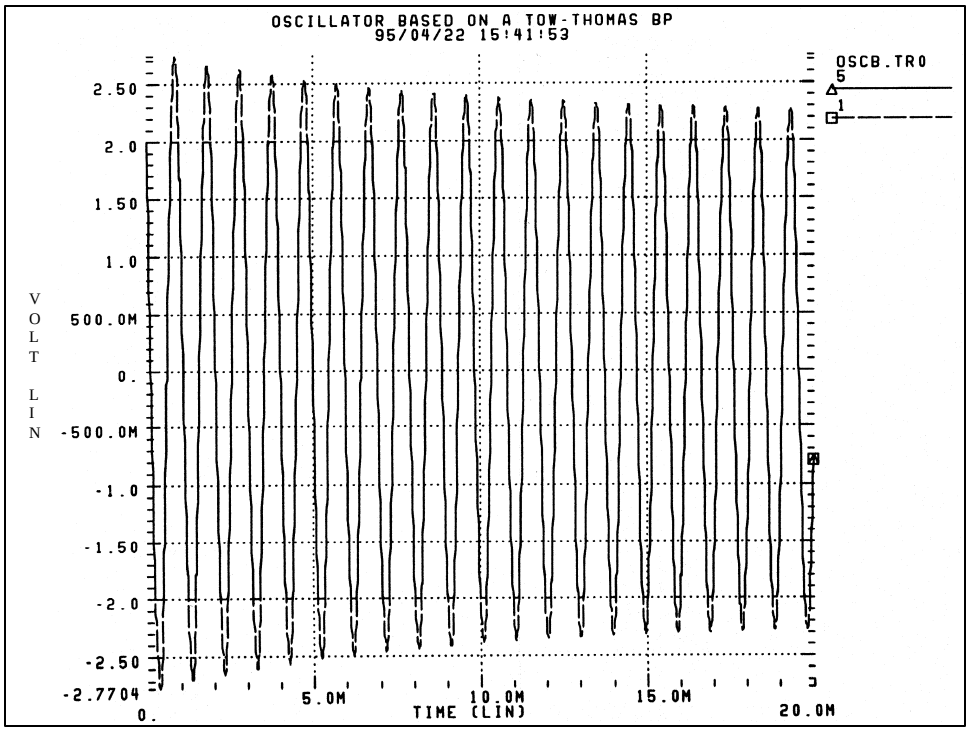


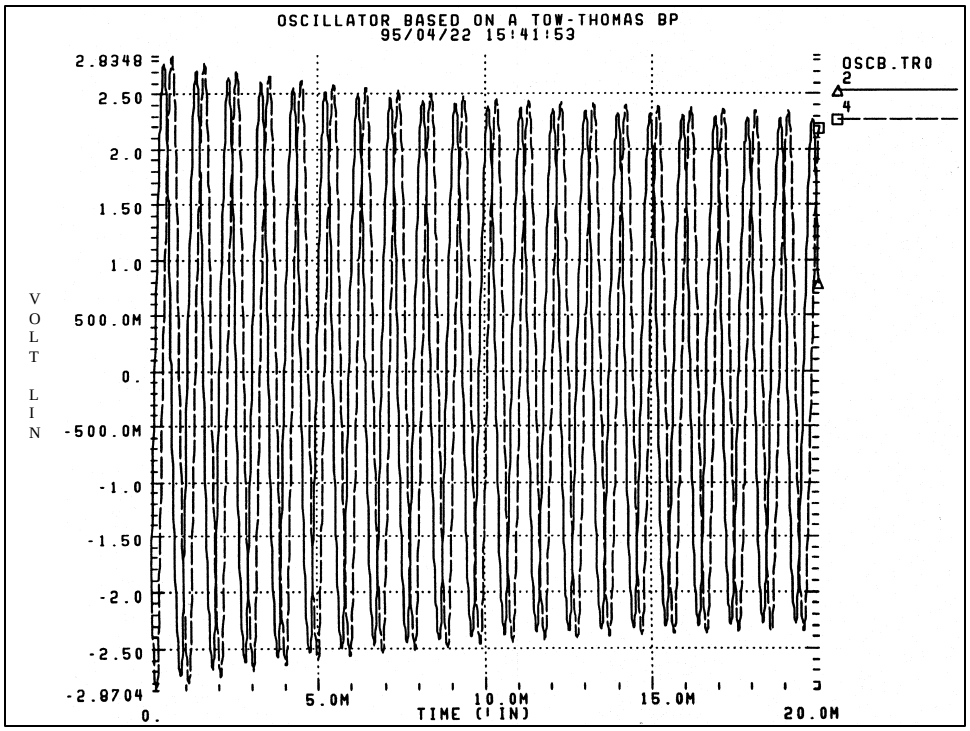
Active RC - Implementation

BP Oscillator

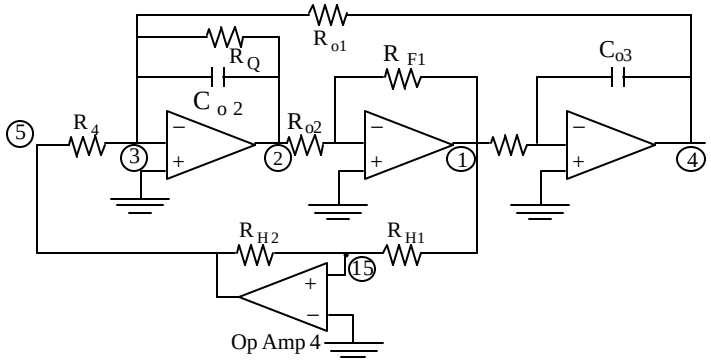


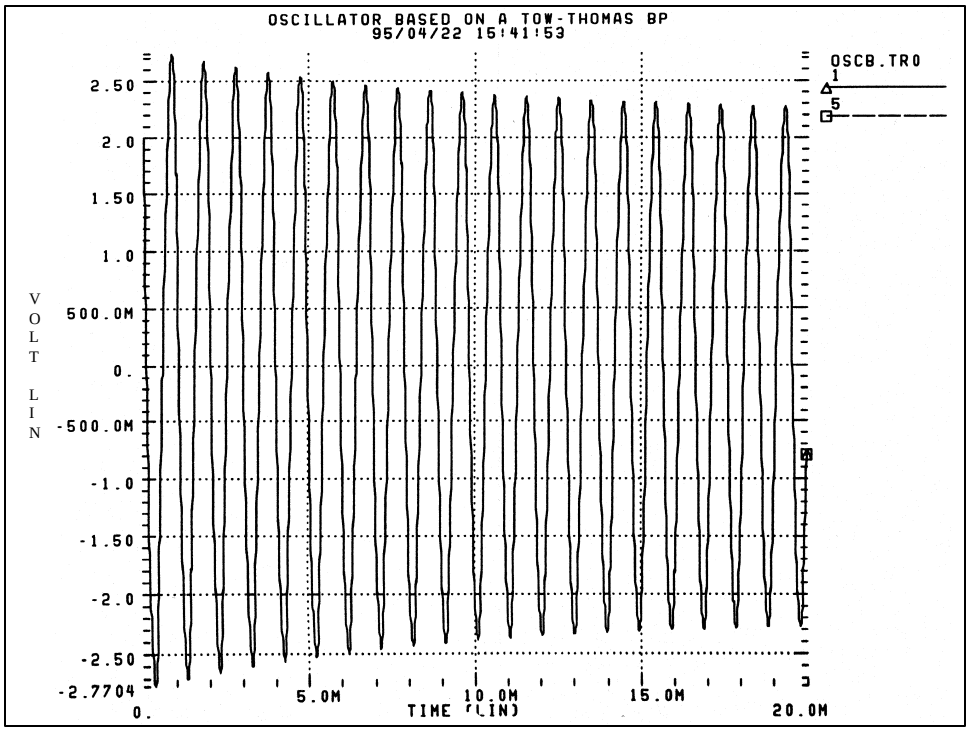

```
Oscillator based on a Tow-Thomas BP
R4      5       3       16K
R01  4   3   1K
RQ   2   3   16K
RF1    6   1   1K
R02    1   7   1K
C02    3   2           0.1591549U
R03        2       6           1K
C03    7   4   0.1501549U
.SUBCKT OPAMP vi-   vi+   v0+   v0-
*
*
RIN     vi-     vi+     10E6
EIN     1       0       vi+     vi-     2E05
R3DB  1       2       1K
C3DB  2       0       0.159E-04
EOUT  3       VO-     2       0       1
DP      2       VP      DIODE
DN      VN      2       DIODE
VPP   VP      0       13
VNN   VN      0       -13
ROUT 3        v0+     75.
.MODEL DIODE D(IS=10E-08 N=0.01)
.ENDS OPAMP
*  DESCRIPTION OF OPAMPS AND THEIR NODES
XOP1  3   0   2   0   OPAMP
XOP2     6   0   1   0      OPAMP
XOP3     7   0   4   0      OPAMP
*LIMITER CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION
RLIM      1           5           200
DP          5           VP          DL
DN          VN          5           DL
.MODEL   DL          D (IS=10E-09 N=0.0001)
VNL         VN          0           -2
VPL         VP          0           2
.TRAN      5U          20m         UIC
.FOURIER                57          V(1)        V(2)        V(4)
.IC  V(1)=2  V(2)=-2  V(4)=-2  V(5)=2
.OPTIONS POST
.END
```

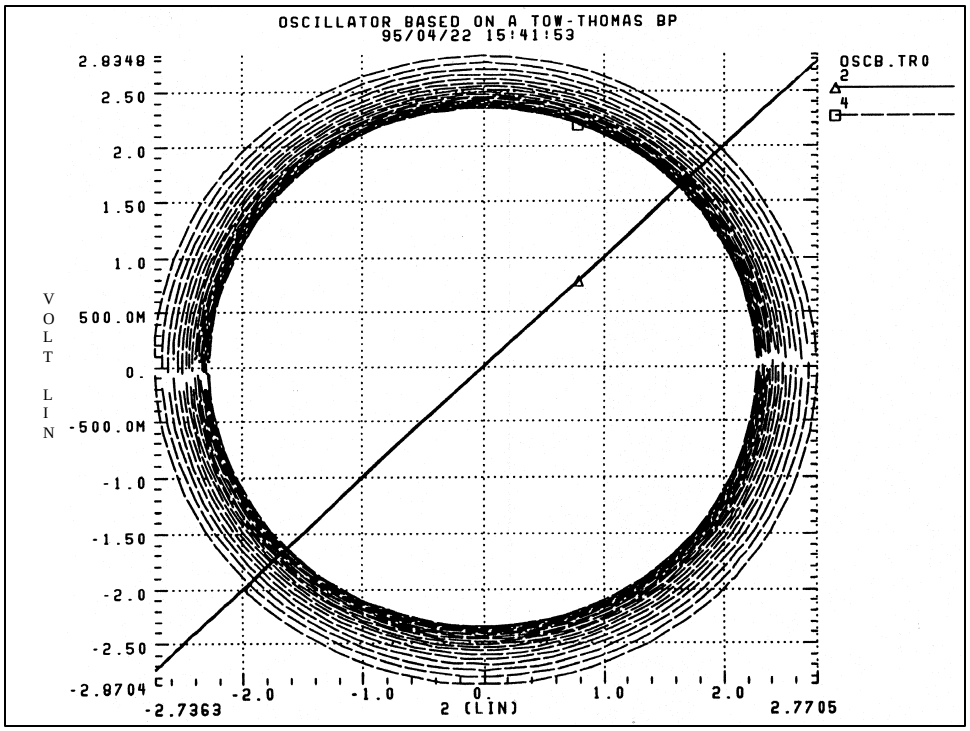

OSCILLATOR BASED ON A TOW-THOMAS BP
95/04/22 15:41:53
OSCB.TR0
5
1
2.50
2.0
1.50
1.0
500.0M
0.
-500.0M
-1.0
-1.50
-2.0
-2.50
-2.7704
VOLT
LIN
0.
5.0M
10.0M
15.0M
20.0M
TIME (LIN)


OSCILLATOR BASED ON A TOW-THOMAS BP
95/04/22 15:41:53
OSCB.TR0
2
4
2.8348
2.50
2.0
1.50
1.0
500.0M
0.
-500.0M
-1.0
-1.50
-2.0
-2.50
-2.8704
VOLT
LIN
0.
5.0M
10.0M
15.0M
20.0M
TIME (LIN)

```
Oscillator based on a Tow-Thomas BP
R4      5       3       16K
R01  4  3   1K
RQ   2  3   16K
R       6  1   1K
R       1  7   1K
C02   3  2       0.1591549U
R03       2       6           1K
C03   7  4   0.1501549U
.SUBCKT OPAMP  vi-   vi+   v0+   v0-
*
*
RIN       vi-   vi+    10E6
EIN       1     0     vi+    vi-    2E05
R3DB   1      2      1K
C3DB   2      0      0.159E-04
EOUT   3      V0-   2      0      1
DP        2      VP     DIODE
DN        VN     2      DIODE
VPP     VP     0       13
VNN     VN     0       -13
ROUT   3       v0+    75.
.MODEL DIODE D(IS=10E-08 N=0.01)
.ENDS OPAMP
*  DESCRIPTION OF OPAMPS AND THEIR NODES
XOP1   3  0   2  0  OPAMP
XOP2      6     0   1   0       OPAMP
XOP3      7     0   4   0       OPAMP
*LIMITER Hysteresis CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION
RH1         1          15         2K
RH2         15         5          13K
XOP4      0          15         5          0          OPAMP
*  DESIRED ANALYSIS RESPONSE
.TRAN      5U          20m          UIC
.FOURIER              57              V(1)   V(2)   V(4)
.IC  V(1)=2  V(2)=-2  V(4)=-2  V(5)=2
.OPTIONS POST
.END
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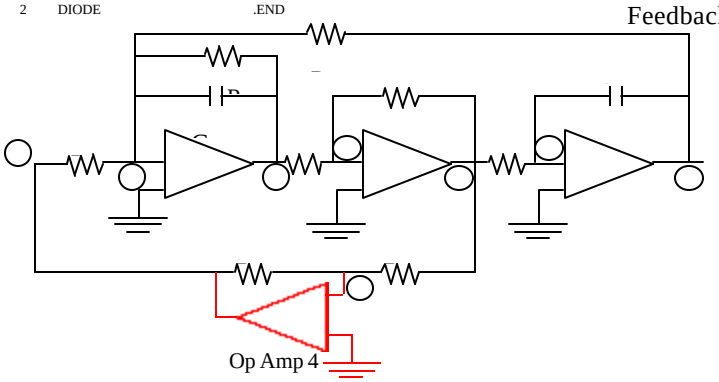




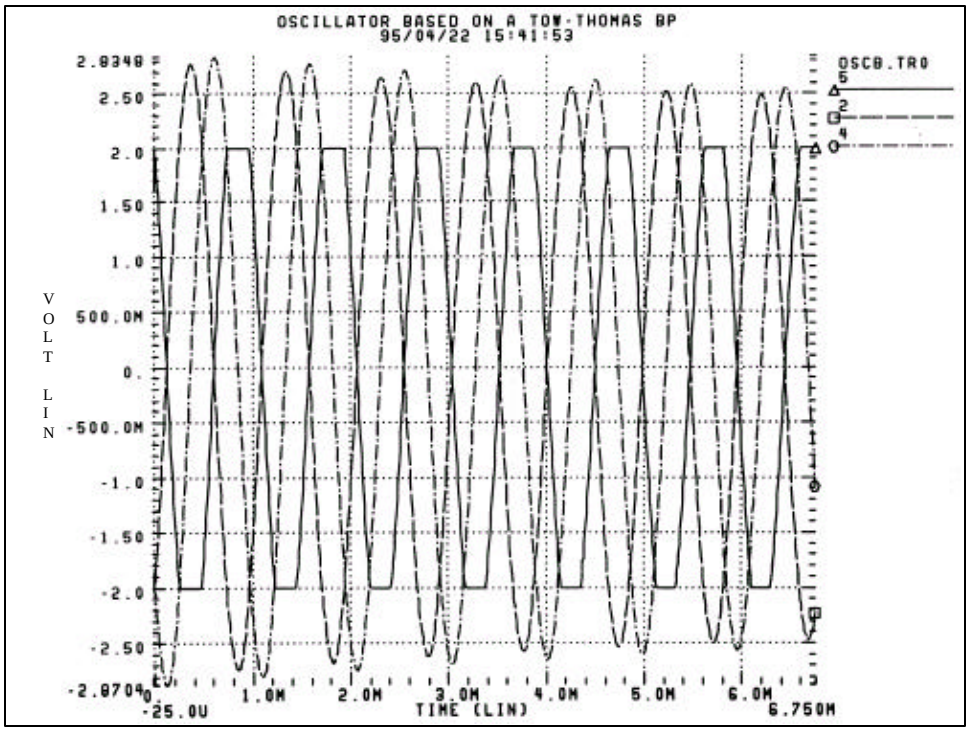


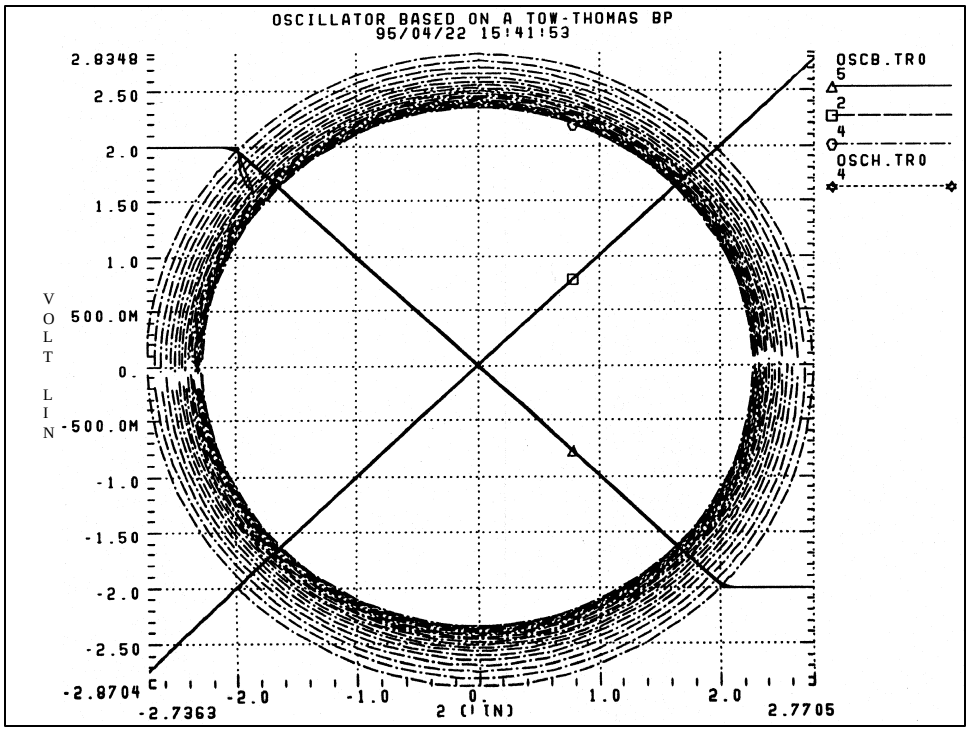

```
Oscillator based on a Tow-Thomas BP
R4      5       3       35K
R01  4  3  1.4K
RQ   1  3  9.6K
R       6  1   1K
R       1  7   1K
C02   3  2      0.1591549U
R03       2       6            1K
C03   7  4  0.1501549U
.SUBCKT OPAMP  vi-    vi+    v0+    v0-
*
*
RIN       vi-    vi+    10E6
EIN       1      0      vi+     vi-     2E05
R3DB   1       2       1K
C3DB   2       0       0.159E-04
EOUT   3       V0-    2       0       1
DP        2       VP     DIODE
DN       VN     2       DIODE
VPP      VP     0       13
VNN     VN     0       -13
ROUT   3       v0+    75.
.MODEL DIODE D(IS=10E-08 N=0.01)
.ENDS OPAMP
*  DESCRIPTION OF OPAMPS AND THEIR NODES
XOP1   3  0   2  0  OPAMP
XOP2      6     0   1   0       OPAMP
XOP3      7     0   4   0       OPAMP
*LIMITER Hysteresis CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION
RH1         1          15         2K
RH2         15         5          13K
XOP4      0          15         5          0          OPAMP
*  DESIRED ANALYSIS RESPONSE
.TRAN      5U          20m          UIC
.FOURIER                57              V(1)    V(2)    V(4)
.IC  V(1)=2  V(2)=-2  V(4)=-2  V(5)=2
.OPTIONS POST
.END
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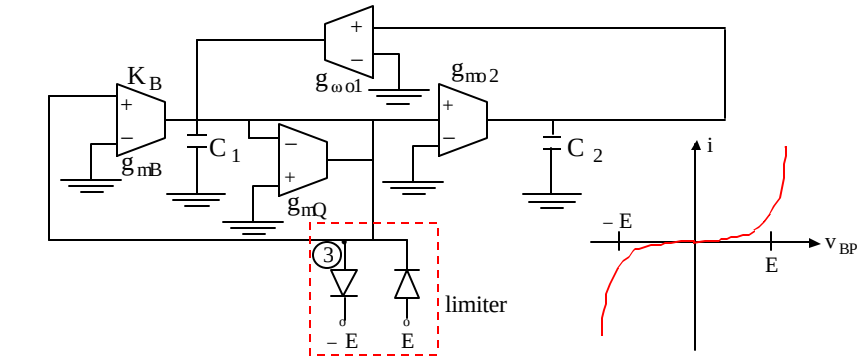
Double Positive Feedback



Op Amp 4

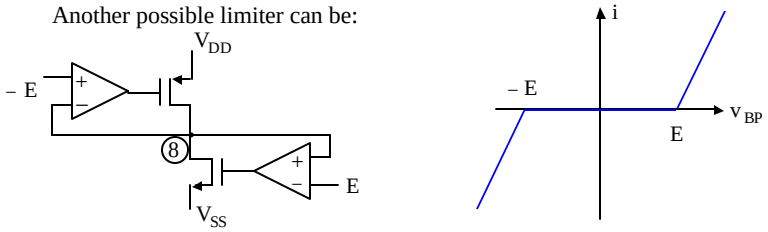

OSCILLATOR BASED ON A TOW-THOMAS BP
95/04/22 15:41:53
OSCB.TR0
5
2
4
2.8348
2.50
2.0
1.50
1.0
500.0M
0.
-500.0M
-1.0
-1.50
-2.0
-2.50
-2.8704
VOLT LIN
-25.0U
1.0M
2.0M
3.0M
4.0M
5.0M
6.0M
6.750M
TIME (LIN)


OSCILLATOR BASED ON A TOW-THOMAS BP
95/04/22 15:41:53
OSCB.TR0
5
2
4
OSCH.TR0
4
2.8348
2.50
2.0
1.50
1.0
500.0M
0.
-500.0M
-1.0
-1.50
-2.0
-2.50
-2.8704
VOLT LIN
-2.7363
-2.0
-1.0
0
1.0
2.0
2.7705
2 (LIN)



OTA - C Bandpass Based Oscillator

Another possible limiter can be:

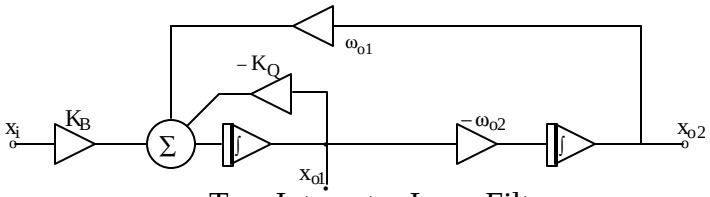


Simulations
Active-Filter Tuned Oscillator

Hints

- First design a band pass filter
  - High Q
  - Gain
- Next decide on type of limiter
- Finally be sure the path from the band pass output through the limiter to the input is positive feedback.

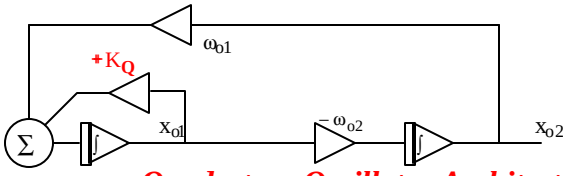
Quadrature Oscillator



Two Integrator Loop Filter

$$H_1(s) = \frac{x_{o1}(s)}{x_i(s)} = \frac{\frac{K_B}{s}}{1 + \frac{K_Q}{s} + \frac{\omega_{o1} \cdot \omega_{o2}}{s^2}} = \frac{K_B s}{s^2 + K_Q s + \omega_{o1}\omega_{o2}}$$

$H_1(s)$ is a second-order bandpass. The topology of this integrator loop can be modified to yield a *quadrature oscillator*.



Quadrature Oscillator Architecture

Observe that the characteristic equation yields:

$$1 - \frac{K_Q}{s} + \frac{\omega_{o1}\omega_{o2}}{s^2} = 0$$

or

$$s^2 - K_Q s + \omega_{o1}\omega_{o2} = 0$$

The roots are placed at

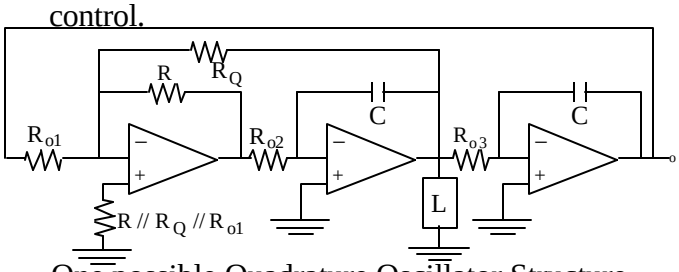
$$s_{1,2} = \frac{K_Q \pm \sqrt{K_Q^2 - 4\omega_{o1}\omega_{o2}}}{2} = \frac{K_Q}{2} \pm \frac{j\sqrt{4\omega_{o1}\omega_{o2} - K_Q^2}}{2}$$

$$K_Q^2 < 4\omega_{o1}\omega_{o2}$$

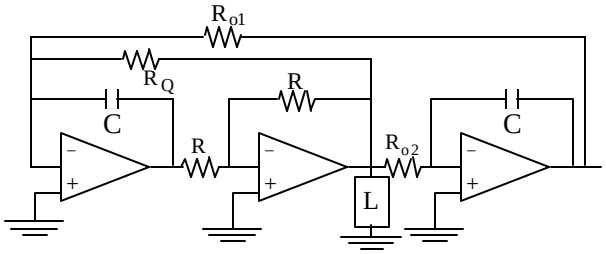
To provide sustained oscillations we need to locate the poles on the $j\omega$ axis, this requires:

i) $K_Q = E$ small positive value

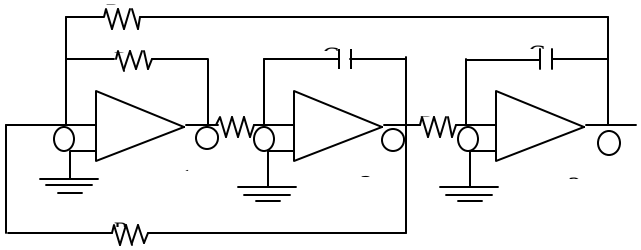
ii) To limit the output by means of a nonlinear gain control.



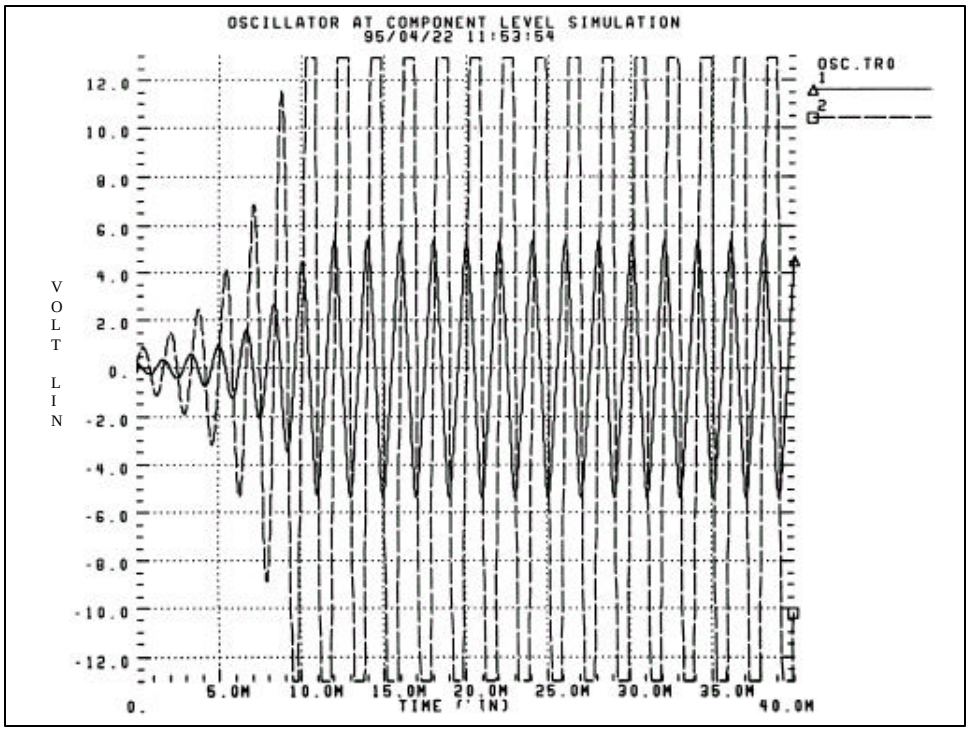
One possible Quadrature Oscillator Structure



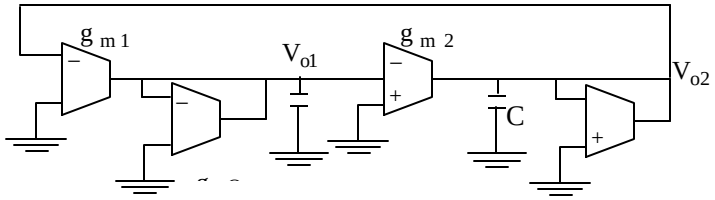

```
Oscillator at component level simulation
RO1   4   3   220K
RQ    1   3   510K
RF1   3   2   310K
RO2   2   6   100K
CO2   6   1   0.01U
RO3   1   7   100K
CO3   7   4   0.001U
.SUBCKT OPAMP   vi-    vi+    v0+    v0-
*
*
RIN     vi-   vi+   10E6
BIN     1     0     vi+      vi-      2E05
R3DB    1     2     1K
C3DB    2     0     0.159E-04
BOUT    3     V0-   2        0        1
DP      2     VP    DIODE
DN      VN    2     DIODE
VPP     VP    0     13
VNN     VN    0     -13
ROOT    3     v0+   75.
.MODEL DIODE D (IS=10E-0S N=0.001)
.ENDS OPAMP
*    DESCRIPTION OF OPAMPS AND THEIR NOOES
XOP1          3     0     2     0     OPAMP
XOP2          6     0     1     0     OPAMP
XOP3          7     0     4     0     OPAMP
.TRAN         10U   40m   UIC
.FOURIER      57    V(1)  V(2)  V(4)
.IC           V(1)=.2   V(2)=-.2   V(4)=-.2
.OPTIONS POST
.OP .08
.END
```



QUADRATURE OSCILLATOR
(NO EXTERNAL LIMITER)



OTA-C QUADRATURE OSCILLATOR



Structure 1. Note the positive feedback in the main loop

$$V_{o1} = \frac{g_{m1} V_{o2}}{g_{mQ} + sC} \qquad (1)$$

$$V_{o2} = \frac{g_{m2} V_{o1}}{} \qquad (2)$$

C.E

$$1 - \frac{g_{m1}}{g_{mQ} + sC}\frac{g_{m2}}{g_{m3} + sC} = 0$$

or

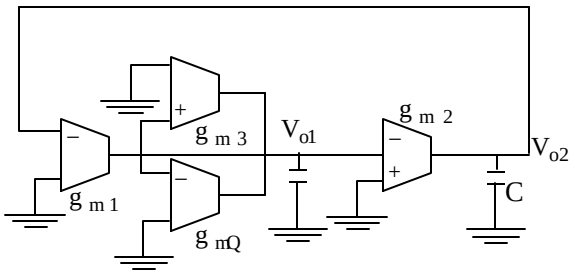
$$s^2 - K_Q s + \omega_{o1}\omega_{o2} = 0$$

Where

$$K_Q = \frac{g_{mQ} - g_{m3}}{C}$$

$$\omega_o^2 = \frac{g_{m1}g_{m2} - g_{mQ}g_{m3}}{C^2}$$

An alternative structure is considered next



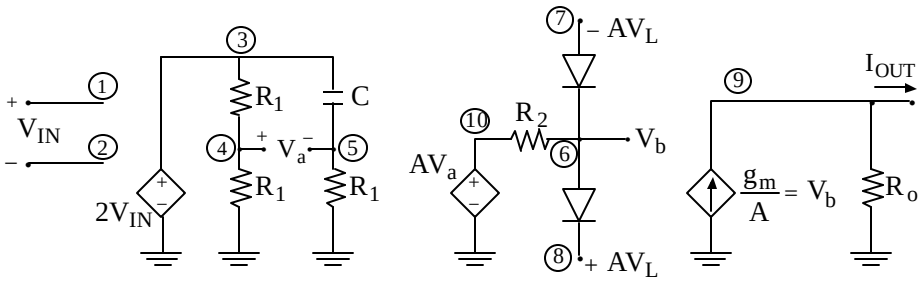
Structure 2. Observe the positive and negative resistance associated with integrator 1.

Where

$$\omega_o^2 = \frac{g_{m1}g_{m2}}{C^2}$$

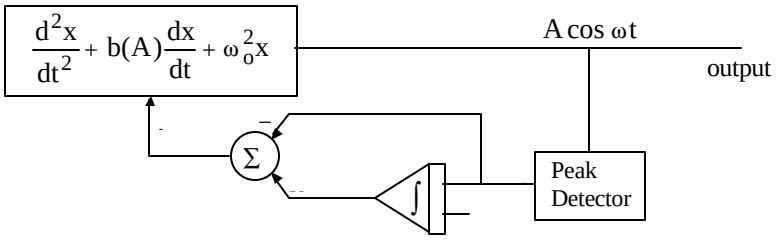
$$K_Q = \frac{g_{mQ} - g_{m3}}{C}$$

This structure is easier to tune. For a realistic design the OTA non-idealities have to be considered.

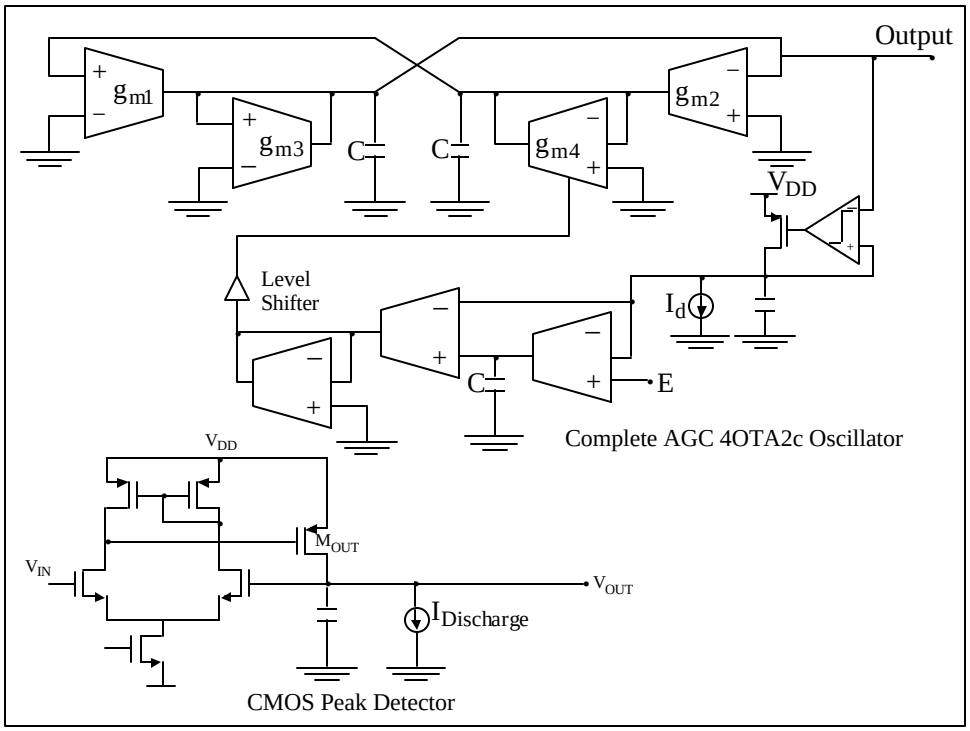


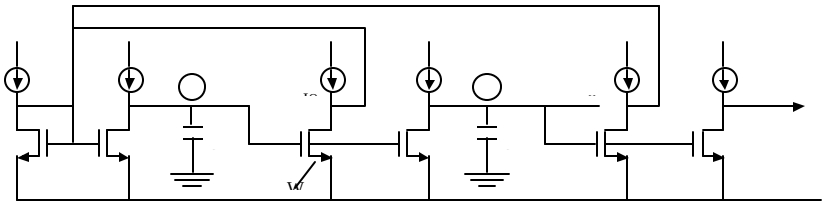
Furthermore <u>amplitude control</u> by <u>external limiters</u>. That is connect the limiters discussed before* at the output of any of the integrators.

Instead of using limiters, another strategy is using an automatic gain control i.e.,



Can you reformulate as an adaptive filter minimizing $(E - Apd)^2$?





- A potential current - mode
  Quadrature Oscillator

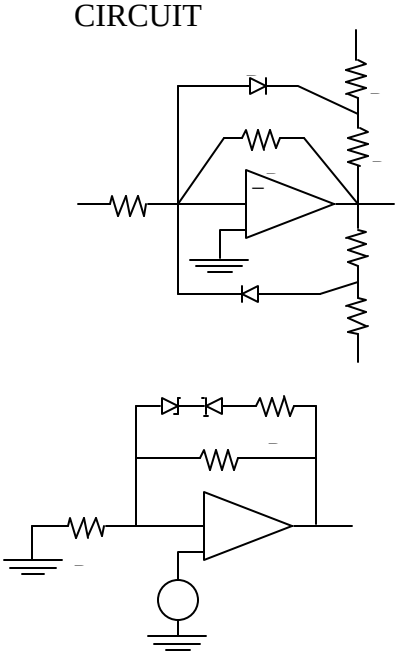
Note that limiters are needed to sustain oscillators. A limiter should be placed at point Ⓐ or Ⓑ.

Limiters, Amplitude Stabilization and Control

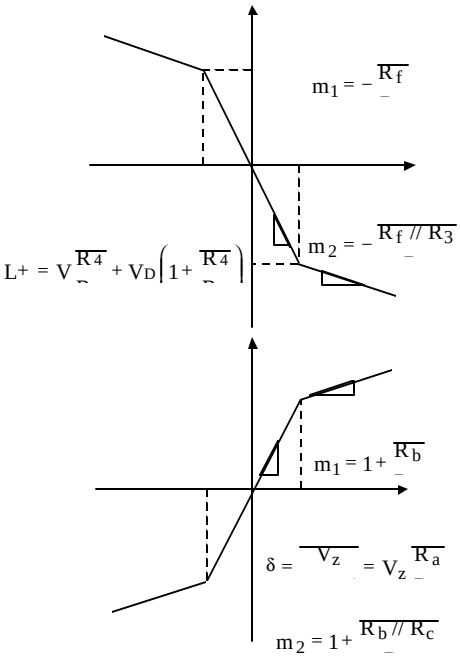
SCHEMES TO
SUSTAIN OSCILLATIONS
AT CONSTANT AMPLITUDE

- Nonlinearity in the amplifier's gain characteristics
- Automatic adjustment of the gain characteristic.

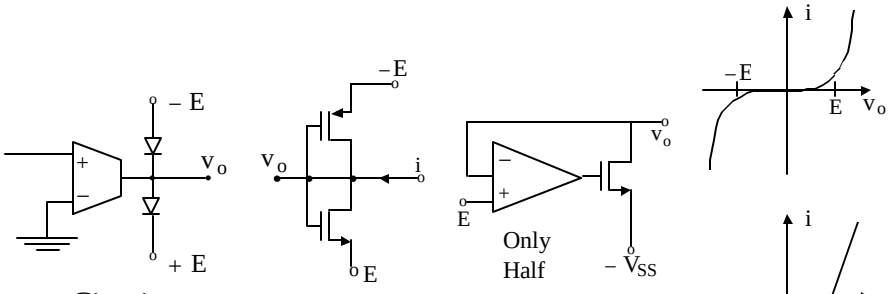
CIRCUIT



I - O CHARACTERISTICS



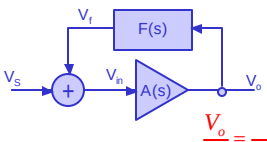
For OTA's



Circuit (a) (b)

Implementations of Limiter

Tuned Oscillators



$$\frac{V_o}{V_S} = \frac{A(s)}{1 - A(s)F(s)}$$

$$V_o = V_{in}A(s)$$

$$V_f = V_oF(s) = V_{in}A(s)F(s)$$

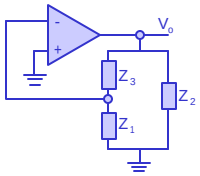
$$\frac{V_f}{V_{in}} = A(s)F(s)$$

Recall the oscillation conditions (Barkhausen)

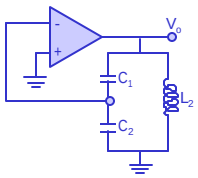
$$\left|\frac{V_f}{V_{in}}\right| = |A(j\omega)||F(j\omega)| \geq 1$$

$$Phase\left(V_f / V_{in}\right) = Phase(A(s)) + Phase(F(s)) = 0^\circ$$

An example:

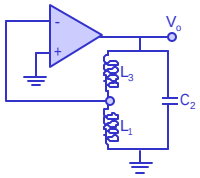


Particular cases of Negative Feedback Oscillators:



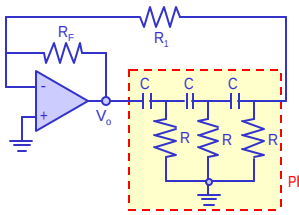
Colpitts

$$f_o = \frac{1}{2\pi}\left\{\frac{1}{L_2\left(\frac{1}{C_1}+\frac{1}{C_3}\right)}\right\}^{1/2}$$



Hartley

$$f_o = \frac{1}{2\pi}\left[\frac{1}{C_2(L_1+L_3)}\right]^{1/2}$$

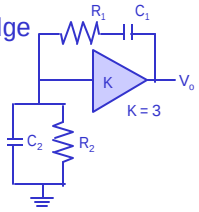


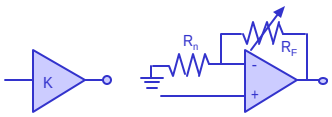
Note that each RC should contribute with 60 degrees, such that the threeRC combination contributes 180º. In addition the amplifier also contributes with 180º

Phase-Shift Oscillator

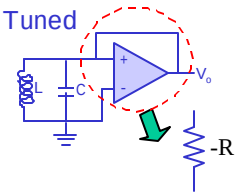
Positive – Feedback Oscillator

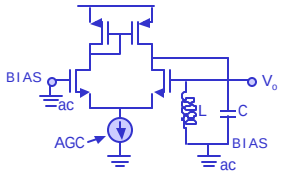
Wien - Bridge





LC - Tuned





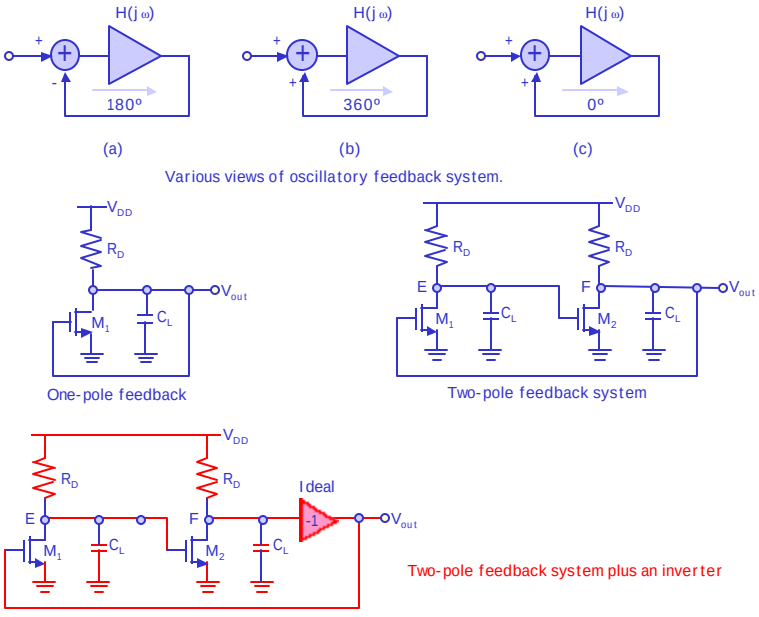
Observe that the positive feedback amplifier has a negative resistance property.

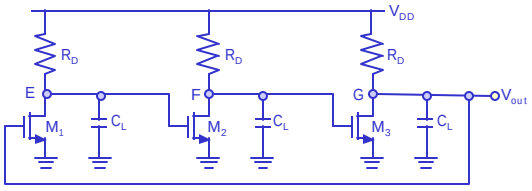
Ring Oscillators

- The main difficulty for using submicron CMOS ring oscillators in wireless communication systems is their relatively poor phase noise response.
- Precaution is required to achieve as low phase noise as possible from CMOS ring oscillators.
  - Dominant noise sources in IC environment are common-mode signals in nature (e.g. power supply noise, substrate-coupled noise).
    - Fully differential design is a must!

Courtesy of Fikret Dulger

Ring Oscillators





Three-stage ring oscillator

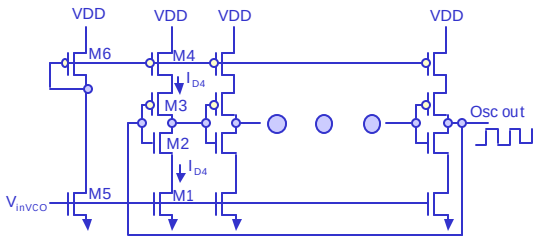
$$H(s) = -\frac{A_0^3}{\left(1+\frac{s}{\omega_0}\right)^3} \qquad \omega_{osc} = \sqrt{3}\omega_0 \qquad \tan^{-1}\frac{\omega_{osc}}{\omega_o} = 60^\circ$$

$$\frac{V_{out}(s)}{V_{in}(s)} = \frac{\frac{-A_0^3}{(1+s/\omega_0)^3}}{1+\frac{A_0^3}{(1+s/\omega_0)^3}} = \frac{-A_0^3}{(1+s/\omega_0)^3 + A_0^3}$$

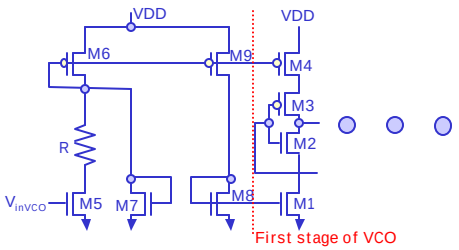
$$\frac{A_0^3}{\left[\sqrt{1+\left(\frac{\omega_{osc}}{\omega_0}\right)^2}\right]^3} = 1$$

$$A_0 = 2$$

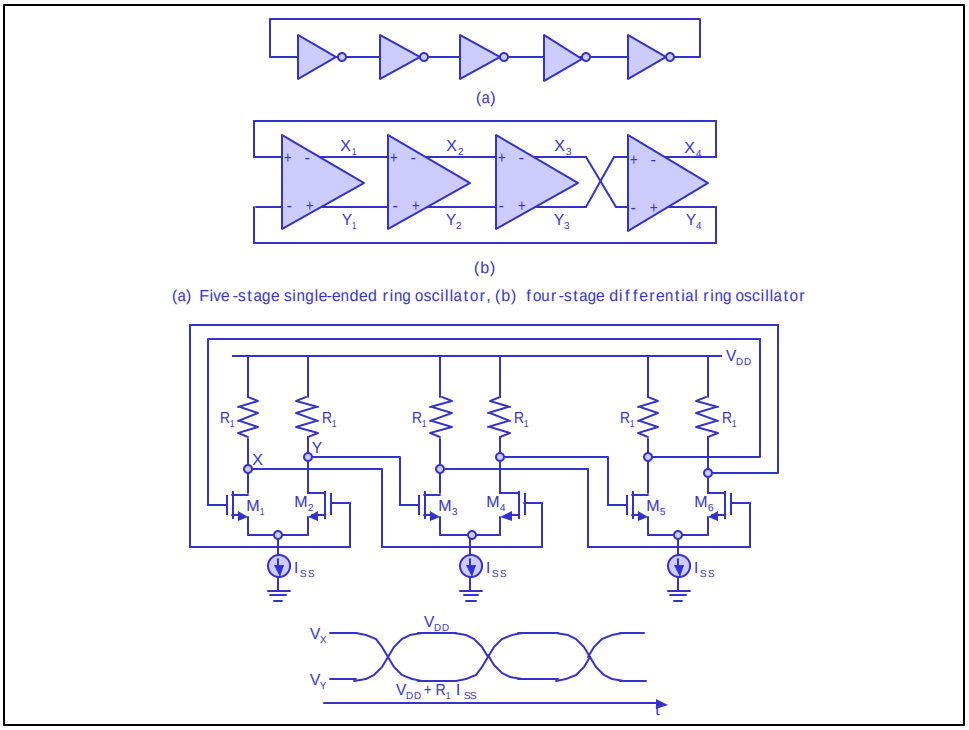
Single –ended Inverters
(delay elements)



Current – starved VCO.

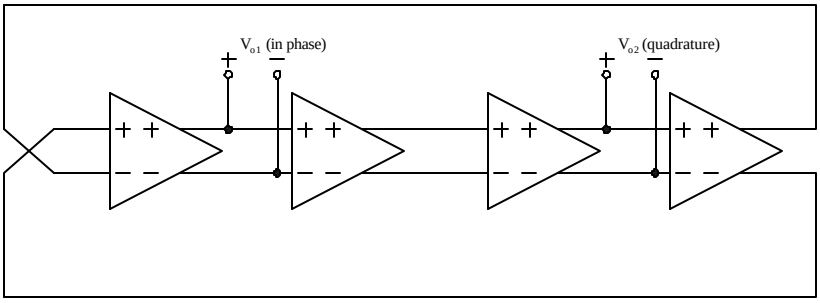


Modifications to the current-starved VCO to set minimum and maximum frequencies.

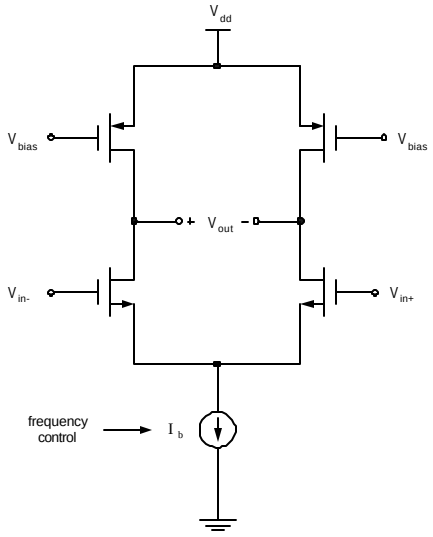


(a) Five-stage single-ended ring oscillator, (b) four-stage differential ring oscillator

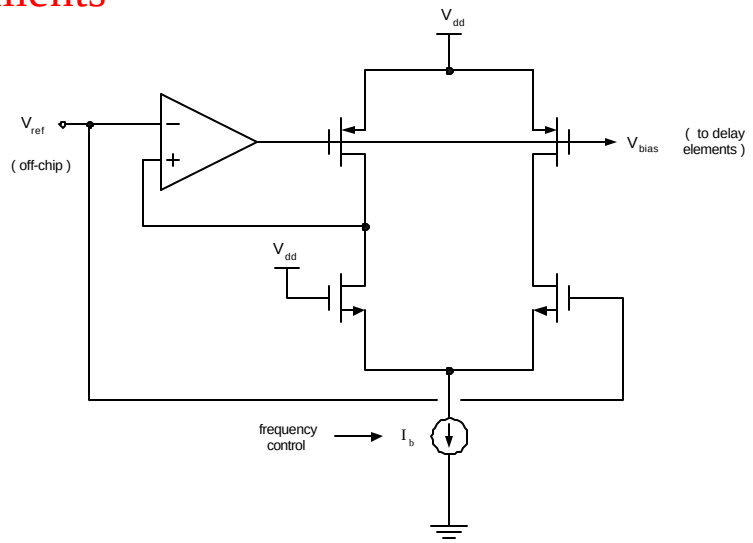
Fully-Differential Ring Oscillator



One potential delay element



Replica Biasing needed for the Delay Elements

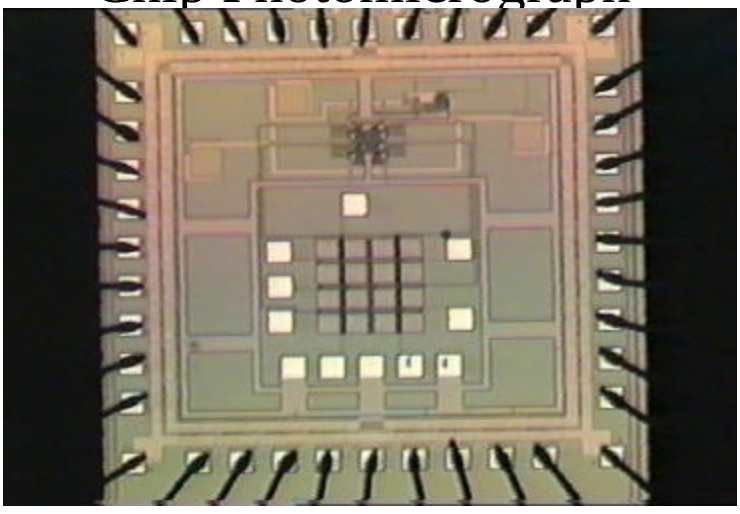


Frequency Control

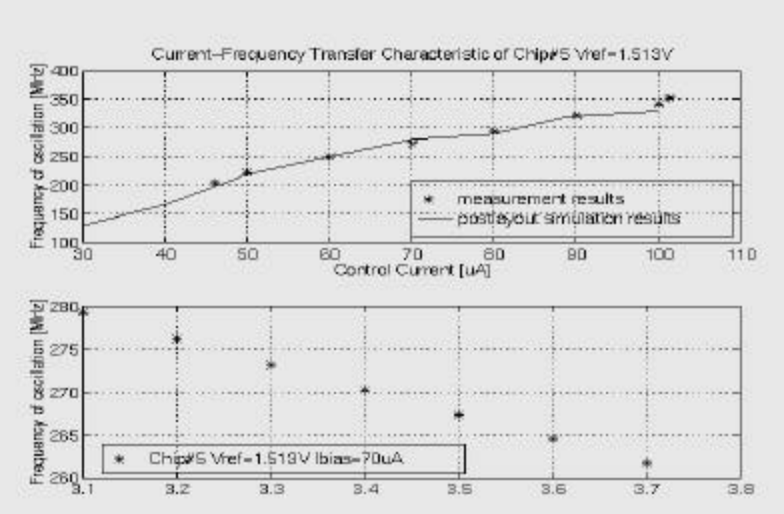
- Frequency of oscillation, (f_{osc}), is controlled through the bias current of a delay element (I_b).
- Maximum peak-to-peak voltage, (V_{pp}), is controlled through the replica biasing.
- Total output capacitance of a delay element, (C_{out}), directly affects the frequency of oscillation.

$$f_{osc} \approx \frac{I_b}{V_{pp}.C_{out}}$$

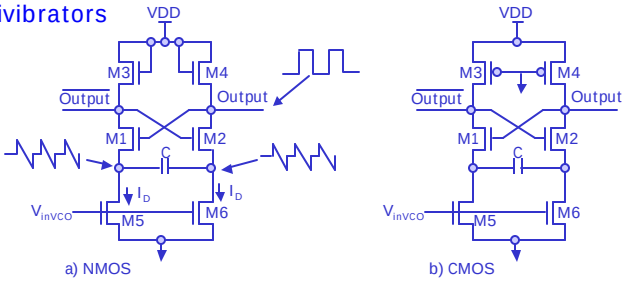
Chip Photomicrograph



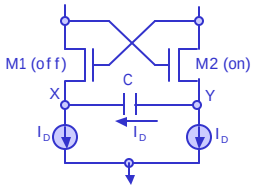
Test Results



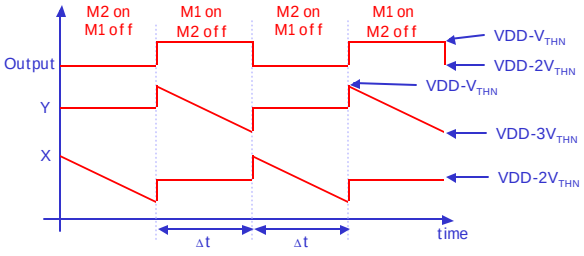
Coupled Multivibrators



Source coupled voltage-controlled oscillators (also known as source coupled multivibrators).



Simplified schematic of source coupled oscillator, M1 is on and M2 is off.

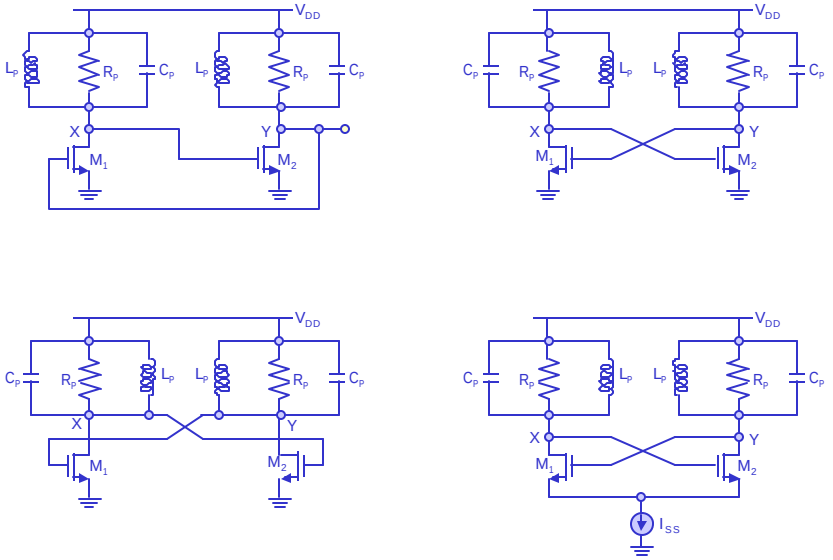


Voltage waveforms for the NMOS source coupled VCO.

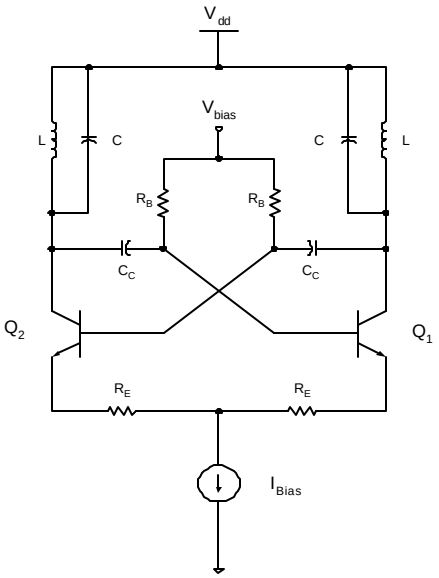
LC Oscillators

- Negative-g_m (negative conductance) oscillators are known to provide the best phase noise performance among integrated oscillators.
- It is possible to build a fully-differential oscillator with only two transistors in the signal path.
- The phase noise depends on the quality factor of the resonator, the noise figure of the amplifier creating the negative resistance and the energy in the resonator.
- The quality factor of the resonator is usually limited by that of the inductor.

Tuned LC Oscillators

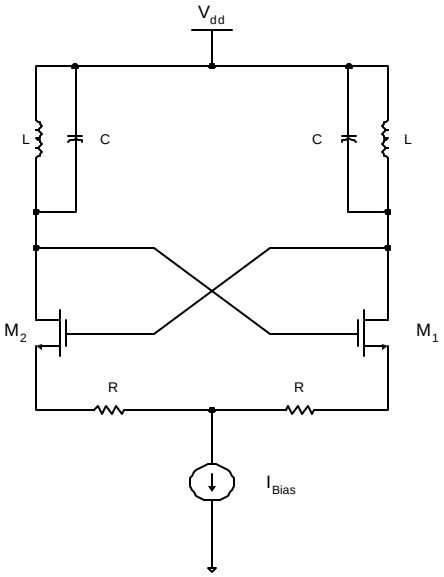


Bipolar LC Oscillator



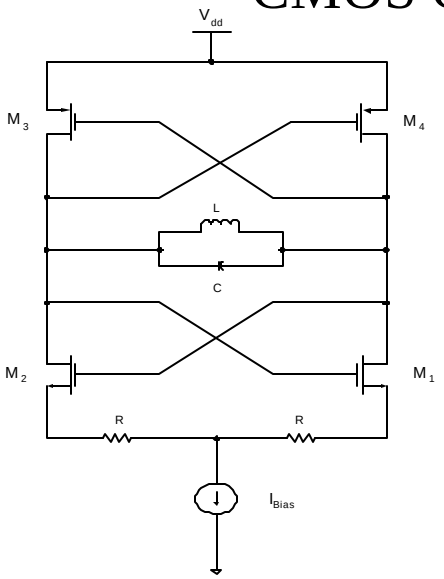
- Capacitive coupling is used to alleviate the forward-biased CB junction problem.
- Higher oscillation amplitude is possible, which reduces the phase noise significantly.
- Further increase in the amplitude is possible through adjusting the value of the bias voltage applied to the base terminals.
- Proper design of the capacitive coupling is vital to ensure oscillation.

NMOS Oscillator



- Direct coupling is possible in the positive feedback amplifier due to the fact that MOS transistors are inherently more linear than the bipolar counterparts.
- Source degeneration resistors reduce the phase noise through linearization.
- *1/f* noise of the NMOS transistors is an important drawback.

CMOS Oscillator



- Less current consumption is possible due to the additional pMOS transistors used for negative conductance generation.
- Better waveform symmetry can be achieved through proper sizing of the transistors.
  - Less phase noise due to less 1/f upconversion!

References

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