EG-247 Signals and Systems

Lesson 1: Introducing the Module

About this presentation

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Office Hours: Digital Technium 123, Mondays at 12:00 (noon)

You can view the notes for this presentation in HTML and PDF.

The source code of this presentation is available in Markdown format from GitHub: Introduction.md.

The GitHub repository EG-247 Resources also contains the source code for all the Matlab/Simulink examples and the Laboratory Exercises.

Lesson 1

Agenda

- Introduction to the Module
- The e-Learning System Unio
- Activities Supporting Week 1
- Introducing Signals and Systems
- Preparing for Lesson 2

Introduction to the Module

Refer to the Blackboard site

- The Approach
- The Syllabus
- The Learning Outcomes
- The Reading List
- The Assessment

The e-Learning System Unio

Activities Supporting Week 1

- *Lesson 1*: This Introduction based on Chapter 1 of Signals and Systems for Dummies (SS4D) by Mark Wickert available as a free sample
- *Lesson 2*: Elementary Signals (Thursday 1:00 pm, Faraday J) based on Chapter 1 of Required Text Signals and Systems with Matlab Computing and Simulink Modeling by Stephen Karris (available as an e-Book)
- *Lab 1*: Matlab for Signals and Systems (Week on Friday, 13th February, 9-11 am, PC Lab 002 Digitial Technium)

Introducing Signals and Systems

Continuous-time signals

Continuous signals are represented mathematically by functions which vary continuously with time.

Sinusoidal signals (e.g. AC) are pretty fundamental in Electrical Engineering. The mathematical model of a sinusoidal signal is $x(t) = A\cos(2\pi f_0 t - \phi)$.

Exercise

Take a moment to think about:

- What is A?
- What is f_0?
- What is ϕ?
- What is the period T_0 of this signal?

Write down your answer in the notes pane.

Gaining insight using computers

To help us answer these questions, let's use our Mathematical tools to plot a signal like this and explore it. The example we will use is from *Signals and Systems for Dummies* (SS4D: page 12):

$$3\cos(2\pi \cdot 2t - 3\pi/4)$$

Wolfram|Alpha

Here's the link: http://www.wolframalpha.com

Paste this into the search box

```
plot 3 cos(2 pi 2 t - 3 pi/4)
```

Matlab

In Matlab we would need to tackle this slightly differently. Here's the code:

```matlab
t = linspace(0, 1, 100);
x = 3 * cos(2*pi*2*t - 3*pi/4);
plot(t,x)
title('A Sinusoidal Signal')
xlabel('Time t (s)')
ylabel('Amplitude')
grid
```

(I will run this code during the live session and we'll import the result into the lesson record.)

Returning to the Question

Run the quiz!

Notes

- In communications and electronic signal processing, the frequency of sinusoidal signals us usually given in *cycles per second* or Hz.
- In mathematics, the frequency is always expressed in *radians per second*.

Exercises

- Use any or all of the computing tools that you have access to to explore other sinusoids. Change the values of the variables and explain what happens.
- Try adding sinusoids of different amplitudes and different frequencies together and see what happens.

Continuous-time Systems

Systems operate on signals. In mathematical terms, a *system* is a function or an *operator*, $H\{\}$ that maps the input signal $x(t)$ to an output signal $y(t)$.

Mathematically we would write this:

$$y(t) = H\{x(t)\}.$$

Example

An example of a continuous-time system is an electronic amplifier with a gain of 5 and level shift of 2: $y(t) = H\{x(t)\} = 5x(t) + 2$.

In this course, we will model such systems as block diagram models in Simulink.
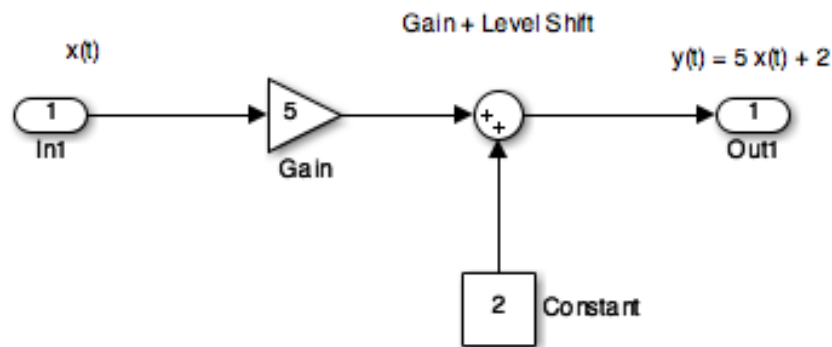
Block diagram model in Simulink

Figure 1: Simulink model of a a continuous-time system

The Simulink code can be downloaded from this file gain_level_shift.slx.

Discrete-time Signals

Disrete-time signals are a function of a time index n. A discrete-time signal $x[n]$, unlike a continuous-time signal $x(t)$, is only defined at integer values of the independent variable n. This means that the signal is only active at specific periods of time. Discrete-time signals can be stored in computer memory.

Example

Consider the following simple signal, a pulse sequence:

$$x[n] = \begin{cases} 5, \ 0 \leq n < 10 \\ 0, \ \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

We can plot this in Matlab as a *stem plot*

First define the function $x[n]$

```matlab
% Define the function $x[n]$
function [ y ] = x( n )
  if n < 0 | n >= 10
    y = 0;
  else
    y = 5;
  end
end
```

Then set up n and reserve some space for storing $x[n]$

```matlab
% Define sample points
n = -15:18;
% Make space for the signal
xn = zeros(size(n));
```

Compute the signal

```matlab
% Compute the signal x[n]
for i = 1:length(xn)
  xn(i) = x(n(i));
end
```

Finally, plot the signal as a *stem* (or *lollipop*) plot

```
stem(n,xn)
axis([-15,18,0,6])
title('Stem Plot for a Discrete Signal')
xlabel('Sample n')
ylabel('Signal x[n]')
grid
```

We'll run this code and paste in the resulting plot during the session.

The Matlab code is available for download as an m-file discrete.m which uses function x.m.

Exercise

Draw a digital signal that represents your student number in some way. For example if your number was 765443, then you could generate a signal for which $x[n] = 0$ when $n < 7$, then $x[n] = 7$ for 7 periods, then $x[n] = 6$ for the next 6 periods, $x[n] = 5$ for 5 periods, and so on. The signal should return to 0 when the last digit has been transmitted.

To plot this on a computer you would need to transcribe $x[n]$ into an array and then use the "lollipop" plot to plot the data. You could just create the array by hand, but you could also create a Matlab or Python function if you would like a challenge.

Discrete-time Systems

A discrete-time system, like its continuous-time counterpart, is a function, $H\{\}$, that maps the input $x[n]$ to the output $y[n] = H\{x[n]\}$. An example of a discrete-time system is the *two-tap* filter:

$$y[n] = H\{x[n]\} = \frac{3}{4}x[n] + \frac{1}{4}x[n-1]$$

The term *tap* denotes that output at time instant n is formed from two time instants of the input, n and $n1$.

Check out a block diagram of a two-tap filter system:

This system is available as a Simulink model discrete_system.slx

In words, this system scales the present input by $3/4$ and adds it to the past value of the input scaled by $1/4$. The notion of the past input comes about because $x[n-1]$ is lagging one sample value behind $x[n]$. The term *filter* describes the output as an *averaging* of the present input and the previous input. *Averaging* is a form of filtering.
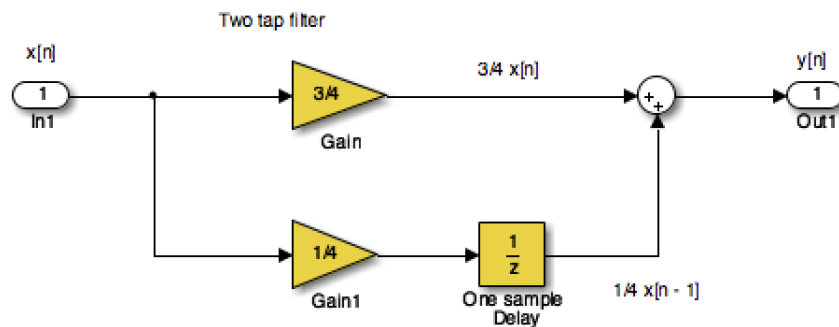
Figure 2: Block diagram of a two-tap filter system

Signal Classifications

Periodic

Signals that repeat over and over are said to be *periodic*. In mathematical terms, a signal is periodic if:

- *Continuous signal $x(t + T) = x(t)$*
- *Discrete signal $x[n + N] = x[n]$*

The smallest T or N for which the equality holds is the *signal period*. The sinusoidal signal we saw earlier is periodic because of the mod 2π property of cosines. The signal of the sinusoid has period 0.5 seconds (s), which turns out to be the reciprocal of the frequency $1/f_0$ Hz.

This Square wave is a 5 Hz waveform sampled at 500 Hz for 1 second

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Matlab

```
%% A Periodic signal (square wave)
t = linspace(0, 1, 500);
plot(t, square(2 * pi * 5 * t));
ylim([-2, 2]);
```
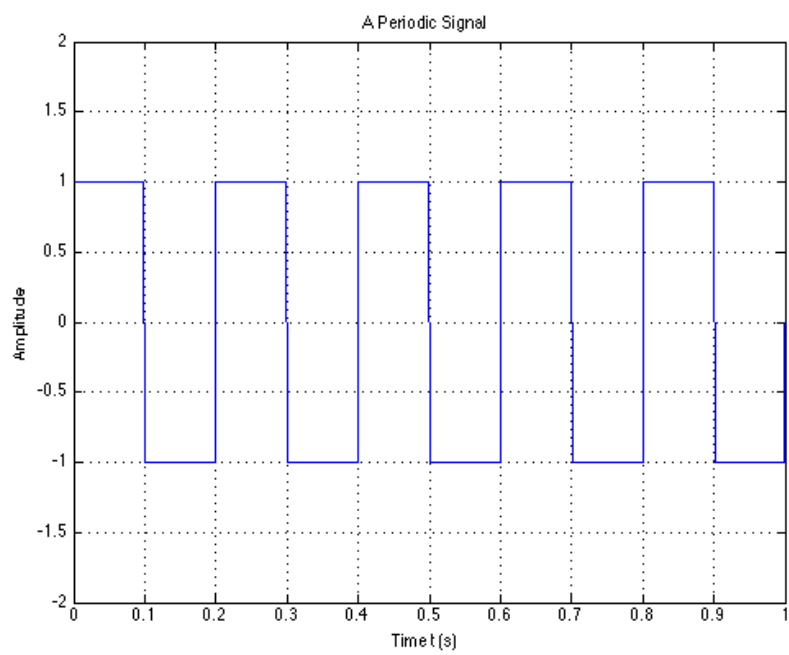
Figure 3: A square wave

8

```
grid
title('A Periodic Signal')
xlabel('Time t (s)')
ylabel('Amplitude')
```

See: periodic.m

Question

For the example we started with $x(t) = 2\cos(2\pi.2t + 3\pi/4)$. Say we sample the cosine wave at 20 times the frequency, what would the sampling period be and what would N be for the sampled waveform?

Write down your answer in the note area

Aperiodic

Signals that are *deterministic* (completely determined functions of time) but not periodic are known as *aperiodic*. Point of view matters. If a signal occurs infrequently, you may view it as aperiodic.

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This is how we generate this aperiodic rectangular pulse of duration τ in Matlab:

Matlab

```
%% An aperiodic function
tau = 1
x = linspace(-1,5,1000);
y = rectangularPulse(0,tau,x);
plot(x,y)
ylim([-0.2,1.2])
grid
title('An Aperiodic Signal')
xlabel('Time t (s)')
ylabel('Amplitude')
```
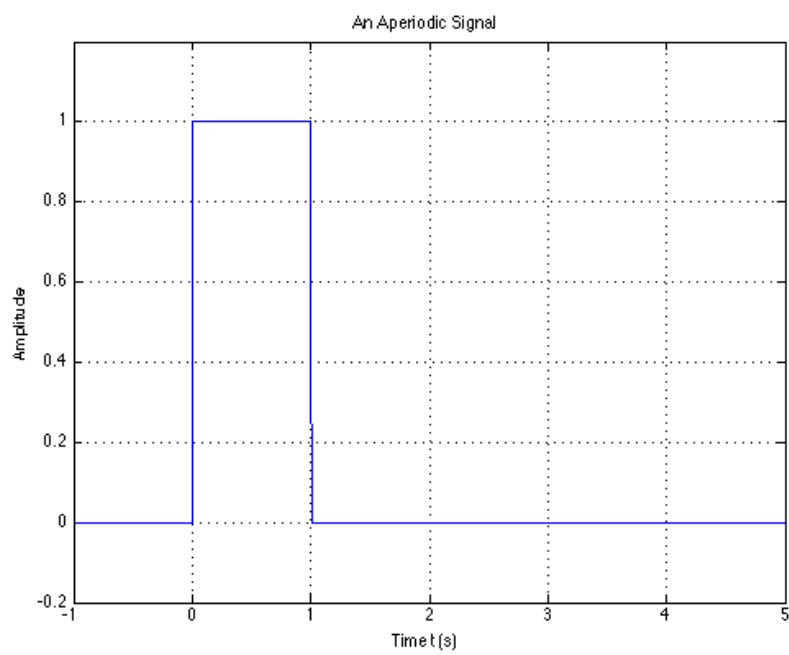
See aperiodic.m

Figure 4: An aperiodic function

Random

A signal is random if one or more signal attributes takes on unpredictable values in a probability sense. Engineers working with communication receivers are concerned with random signals, especially noise.
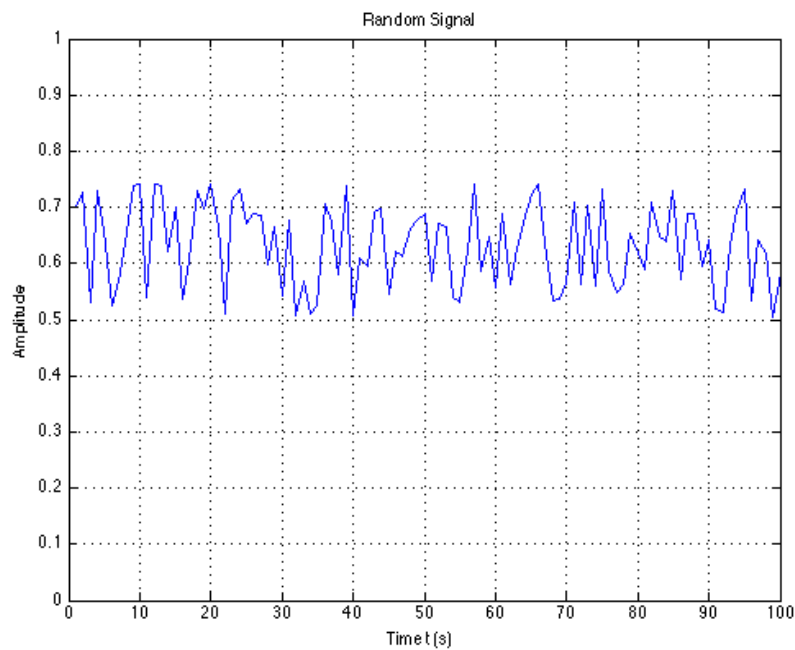

Figure 5: A random signal

Matlab

```matlab
%% Plot a Random Signal
plot(0.5 + 0.25 * rand(100,1))
ylim([0,1])
grid
title('Random Signal')
xlabel('Time t (s)')
ylabel('Amplitude')
```

See: random.m

Domains for Signals and Systems

Most of the signals we encounter on a daily basis reside in the time domain. They're functions of independent variable t or n. But sometimes when you're working with continuous-time signals, you may need to transform away from the time domain (t) to either the frequency domain (f or ω) or the [Laplace] s-domain (s). Similarly, for discrete-time signals, you may need to transform from the discrete-time domain (n) to the frequency domain ($\hat{\omega}$) or the z-domain (z).

Systems, continuous and discrete, can also be transformed to the frequency and s- and z-domains, respectively. Signals can, in fact, be passed through systems in these alternative domains. When a signal is passed through a system in the frequency domain, for example, the frequency domain output signal can later be returned to the time domain and appear just as if the time- domain version of the system operated on the signal in the time domain.

This section briefly introduces the world of signals and systems in the frequency, s-, and z-domains. More on these domains will follow.

Viewing Signals in the Frequency Domain

Consider the sum of a two-sinusoids signal

$$x(t) = \underbrace{A_1 \cos(2\pi f_1 t)}_{s_1} + \underbrace{A_2 \cos(2\pi f_2 t)}_{s_2}$$

Matlab code: two_sines.m

(This example relies on arrow.m by Erik Johnson available from the Matlab File Exchange.)

The top waveform plot, denoted s_1, is a single sinusoid at frequency f_1 and peak amplitude A_1. The waveform repeats every period $T_1 = 1/f_1$. The second waveform plot, denoted s_2, is a single sinusoid at frequency $f_2 > f_1$ and peak amplitude $A_2 < A_1$. The sum signal, $s_1 + s_2$, in the time domain is a squiggly line (third waveform plot), but the amplitudes and frequencies (periods) of the sinusoids aren't clear here as they are in the first two plots. The frequency spectrum (bottom plot) reveals that $x(t)$ is composed of just two sinusoids, with both the frequencies and amplitudes discernible.

Think about tuning in a radio station. Stations are located at different center frequencies. The stations don't interfere with one another because they're separated from each other in the frequency domain. In the frequency spectrum plot,
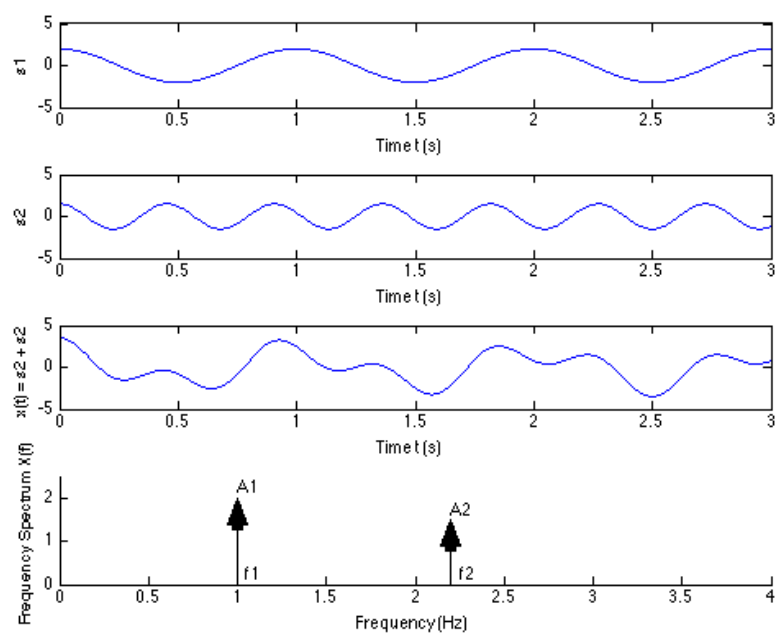
Figure 6: A two-sinusoids signal

13

imagine that f_1 and f_2 are the signals from two radio stations, viewed in the frequency domain. You can design a receiving system to filter s_1 from $s_1 + s_2$. The filter is designed to pass s_1 and block s_2.

Fourier Transform

We use the *Fourier transform* to move away from the time domain and into the frequency domain. To get back to the time domain, use the *inverse Fourier transform*. We will found out more about these transforms in this module.

Laplace and Z-Transform Domains

From the time domain to the frequency domain, only one independent variable, $t \to f$, exists. When a signal is transformed to the s-domain, it becomes a function of a complex variable $s = \sigma + j\omega$. The two variables (real and imaginary parts) describe a location in the s-plane.

In addition to visualization properties, the s-domain reduces differential equation solving to algebraic manipulation. For discrete-time signals, the z-transform accomplishes the same thing, except differential equations are replaced by difference equations.

Systems Thinking and Systems Design

See section **Testing Product Concepts with Behavioral Level Modeling** from Chapter 1 of SS4D (pages 18–20) and summarize this for yourself.

- We will use *behavioural modelling*
- We will rely on *abstraction*
- We work *top-down*
- We make use of *mathematics* and *mathematical software.*

Familiar Signals and Systems

See Chapter 1 of SS4D for notes and details.

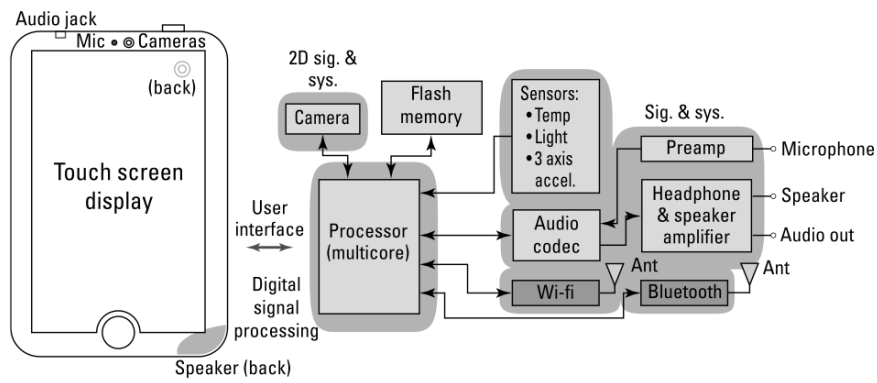
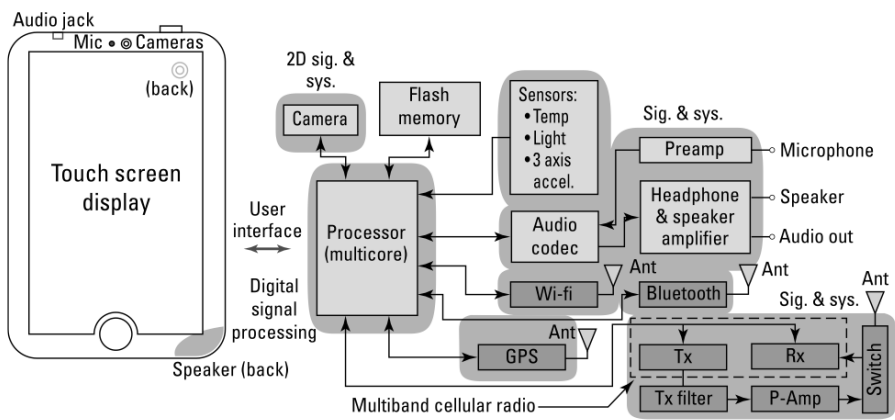-------------------------------------

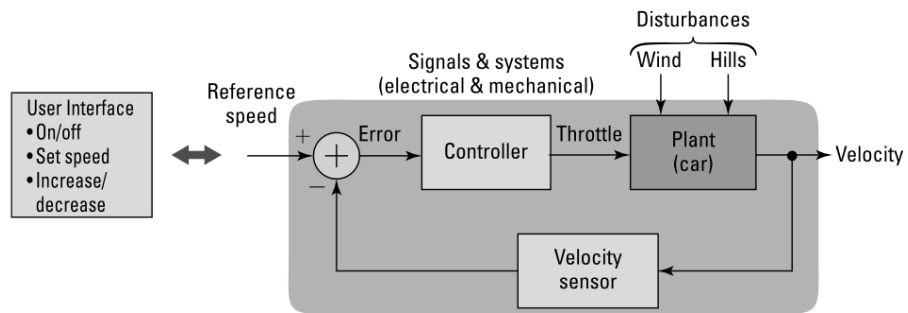Figure 7: An MP3 player

Figure 8: A smart phone

Figure 9: Cruise control – a control system

Concluding Example: Some Basic Signal Operations

Consider a signal $f(t)$

$$x = f(t) = \begin{cases} 0 & : \ t < -1 \\ t+1 & : \ -1 \le t \le 1 \\ 0 & : \ t > 1 \end{cases}$$

Sketch this signal.

Preparing for Second Session

- Do the homework (post-class activity)

- In the second lesson we will work through the hoemwork exercise then do some exercises based on Chapter 1 of Karris.