Lorenz Attractor

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**Goal:**

*Program the Atmega328 to provide basic support for floating-point operations. Then connect a MCP4725 DAC to the I2C port of the Atmega328. Finally, the MCP4725 will output a meaningful voltage to the oscilloscope which is interpreted as the solution to a floating-point problem.*

**Deliverables:**

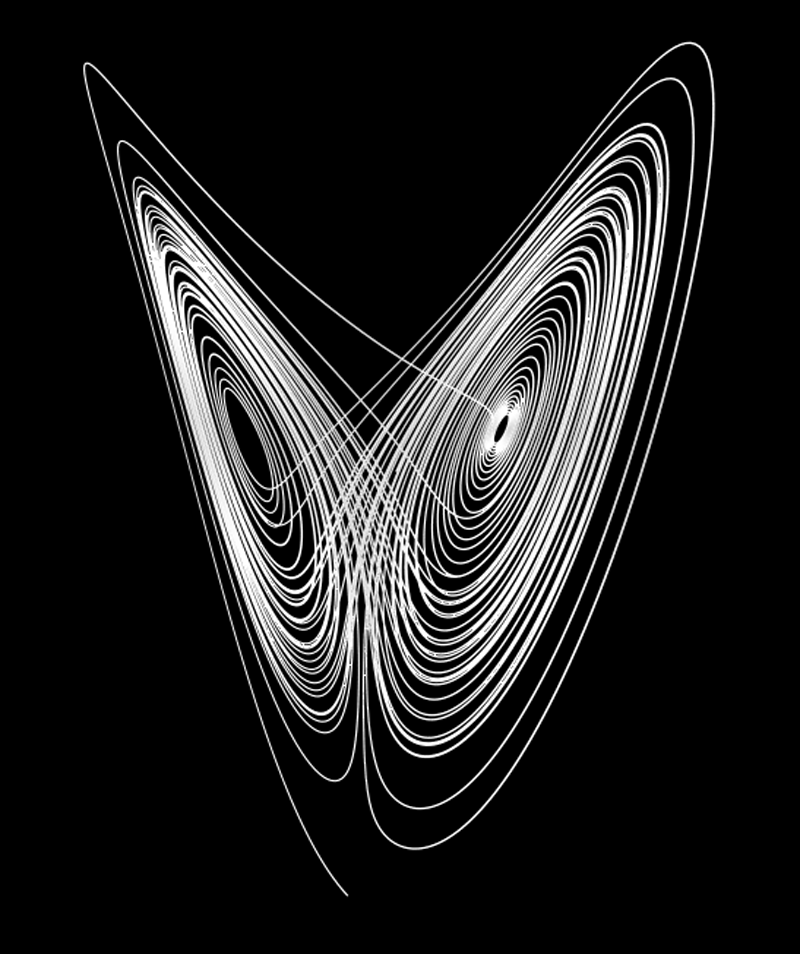
*The purpose of this project is to demonstrate floating-point capability of the Atmega328 by computing the Lorenz attractor which is a non-linear ordinary differential equation proposed by Edward Lorenz. The solution will then be visually graphed onto the oscilloscope via MCP4725. Because of the limitation of the oscilloscope, the graph will be in 2D (XY) even though the Lorenz attractor is 3D (XYZ).*

# Literature survey[[1]](#footnote-1)

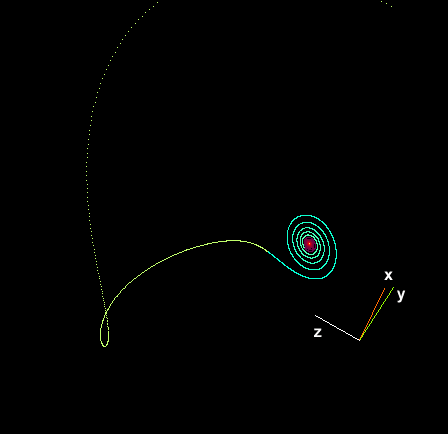
Mathematical computation has been the primary motivation for the development of processors. A lot of mathematical computation will most likely require a MCU [microcontroller] to evaluate an equation where data is fed into its input and outputs a solution to the user. Every MCU can compute an equation that accepts integer values and outputs an integer solution. But these are simple, ubiquitous functions expected on any ordinary MCU. Unfortunately, there are plethora of problems that require fractional values. Neglecting these fractional parts will return unwanted solutions to the user. In the case of this project, the Lorenz attractor is a system of equations that requires precise solutions, thus truncating fractional parts are unacceptable.

The Lorenz attractor is a unique equation because it exhibits a nonlinear behavior. The nonlinear property is defined as a system’s output change will not be proportional to the change of its input. Furthermore, Lorenz attractor is famously known for its chaotic set of solutions. The chaotic property of the Lorenz attractor causes the system to be extremely sensitive to any change of its initial condition. In other words, any loss in accuracy such as truncating the fractional part during the computation will lead to inevitable errors with values that will either explode into massive numbers or deadlocks into a pattern (programming Lorenz attractor using integral datatype only). The Lorenz attractor appears in some models for lasers, dynamos, thermosyphons, brushless DC motors, electric circuits, chemical reactions, and osmosis. For Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist, the attractor was derived as model for convection in the earth’s atmosphere. The following derivatives are the Lorenz equations:

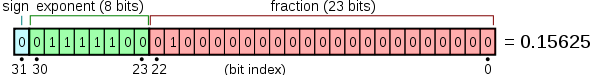
The constants σ, ρ, and β are the parameters that will affect the graph. Edward Lorenz used the following values: σ = 10, ρ = 28, and β = 8/3. These values should trace out a butterfly shaped graph on a 3D Cartesian. coordinate as shown below.



Note that the predefined constants guarantee a chaotic solution while others may or may not produce one. The constant of interest is ρ [rho] or also known as the Rayleigh number. Adjusting ρ will affect the chaos of the trace. Small values of ρ will most likely produce a stable system and trace out a pitchfork bifurcation as shown below instead of the butterfly as shown before.



To implement the Lorenz attractor, IEEE 754 single-precision will be used to represent a 32-bit floating-point value. The choice of 32-bit resolution is sufficient to prevent the Lorenz attractor from exploding. Theoretically, using 64-bit IEEE double-precision is a more logical choice to reduce the errors that a 32-bit single-precision has. The issue with 64-bit is that there is a lot more overhead compared to 32-bit, thus isn’t feasible for an 8-bit MCU. The following diagram represents the fields for a 32-bit floating-point value.



There are three fields: sign, exponent, and fraction [mantissa]. Explaining each field and how to convert a decimal into floating-point numbers will take several pages which is beyond the scope of this report. But, doing a simple Internet search on IEEE 754 single-precision will offer numerous tutorials. It should be noted that arithmetic operations used in this project will be addition, subtraction, and multiplication. Addition and subtraction are straightforward to implement but multiplication adds the most overhead to the Atmega328 with several different algorithms available. Multiplication comes into play when two mantissas are multiplied during a floating-point multiplication. A naïve solution is to brute force the computation by looping a running sum variable. Brute force is only acceptable if the multiplication is trivial such as 8-bit multiplicand and multiplier. Unfortunately for this situation, 25-bit multiplication is heavy for brute force (potentially over 33,000,000 clock cycles if values are large enough). The algorithm of choice for this project will be the Booth multiplication. With this algorithm, in the worst-case scenario is no longer bounded linearly but now constantly because Booth multiplication only shifts a fixed number of times for every computation (depending on how many bits for either multiplicand or multiplier).

Once the float-pointing functions are implemented into the Atmgea328, the MCP4725 will be interfaced via I2C to the Atmega328. The MCP4725 is an economical DAC (Digital to Analog Converter) with a 12-bit resolution [0 – 4095]. Using an MCP4725 with an oscilloscope, the MCP4725 will graph the coordinates of the Lorenz attractor onto the oscilloscope. Since the Lorenz attractor also has negative values, an H-bridge circuit is required to reverse the polarity. H-bridge circuit is a preferable choice to represent negative values, but a more convenient solution is to use 2048 as the reference point of 0. Anything below 2048 is negative and above is positive. Since the Lorenz attractor is a 3D graph, two MCP4725s are required to graph with any choice of the two axes (XY is used for this case). It is possible to program two MCP4725s on a single bus using I2C but because the MCP4725 package has a preset built-in address, it isn’t possible unless modification to both MCP4725s are done by soldering and cutting out the pull-up resistors. Instead of soldering and again for convenience, another Atmega328 and MCP4725 is added to the circuit. A simple inter-process communication via ports will synchronize both Atmega328s and MCP4725s to work in unison (one for X and other for Y).

# Components

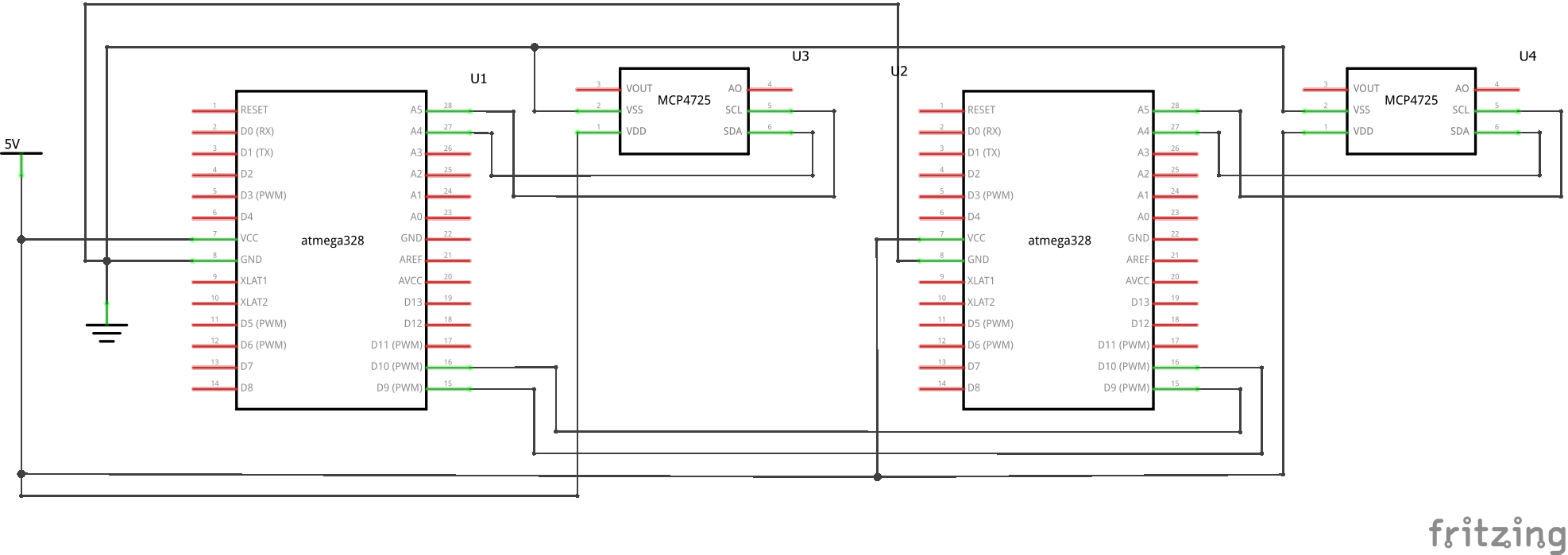
## Atmega328

Atmega328 is part of a family of AVR microcontrollers developed by Atmel. These AVR microcontrollers use a modified Harvard architecture 8-bit RISC. The Atmega328 has 32 general purpose working registers, 32 KB programmable flash, 1 KB EEPROM, 2 KB SRAM, 23 general purpose I/O, counters/timers, ADC, PWM, USART, I2C, Watchdog Timer, and SPI support.

## MCP4725

The MCP4725 is a low-power, high accuracy 12-bit DAC with a built-in EEPROM. It is programmed via I2C interface command. A 12-bit value is written to the MCP4725’s register to adjust the output voltage. Writing to the EEPROM is optional if the user wishes to save the last value written to the MCP4725 before powered off. Note that writing to EEPROM is significantly slower than just writing to the registers of the MCP4725. Therefore, avoid writing to the EEPROM for optimal operations. The output of the voltage depends on what 12-bit value written to the register and the reference voltage. Caution must be exercised when picking a reference voltage to prevent damage to the MCP4725 or misinterpret the values. MCP4725 accepts a range of 2.7V to 5.5V but preferred values are 3.3V or 5V. If the voltage source is stable, using 3.3V will give you the most precise result but for this project, 5V is used instead. There are three speeds that the MCP4725 can operate: standard (100kbps), fast (400 kbps), and high-speed (3.4 Mbps). The MCP4725 can interchange between normal and power-down mode.

# Schematics



# Implementation

* Atmega328
  + Implement 32-bit floating-point functions: addition, subtraction, and multiplication
  + Implement I2C functions to interact with the MCP4725
  + Implement a function that converts 32-bit floating-point into a binary value for the MCP4725 to output (since the values are small, scale it up at least by multiplying 32)
  + First Atmega328 should be program to output X and second Atmega328 for Y.
* MCP4725
  + Libraries for I2C can be found on the Internet but it is also simple to write
  + Reference voltage should be 5V
  + 2048 should be the reference point for 0
  + Connect output voltage to oscilloscope
  + Only write to the registers (EEPROM will slow down the Lorenz trace on oscilloscope)

# Links

# Conclusion

Implementing floating-point functions onto the Atmega328 allows it to compute the Lorenz attractor. Most importantly, it

References

**Atmgea328 Datasheet:** [**http://ww1.microchip.com/downloads/en/DeviceDoc/Atmel-42735-8-bit-AVR-Microcontroller-ATmega328-328P\_Datasheet.pdf**](http://ww1.microchip.com/downloads/en/DeviceDoc/Atmel-42735-8-bit-AVR-Microcontroller-ATmega328-328P_Datasheet.pdf)

**MCP4725 Datasheet:** [**https://www.sparkfun.com/datasheets/BreakoutBoards/MCP4725.pdf**](https://www.sparkfun.com/datasheets/BreakoutBoards/MCP4725.pdf)

**IEEE 754:** [**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-precision\_floating-point\_format**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-precision_floating-point_format)

**Floating-point Arithmetic:** [**http://www.toves.org/books/float/**](http://www.toves.org/books/float/)

**Lorenz System:** [**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorenz\_system**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorenz_system)

**Lorenz Attractor:** [**http://paulbourke.net/fractals/lorenz/**](http://paulbourke.net/fractals/lorenz/)

**Booth Multiplication:** [**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booth%27s\_multiplication\_algorithm**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booth%27s_multiplication_algorithm)

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)