CSE 350: Digital Electronics and Pulse Techniques Project
Mixed Signal Generator Using Operational Amplifiers

Aditi Roy Adri
ID: 23101314
Shiva Prasad Sarkar
ID: 23101302
Shafi Ahmed Adib
ID: 23101307
Tasfia Islam
ID: 23101481
Group 4, Section 11

***Abstract*—This project presents the hardware design and implementation of a Mixed Signal Generator capable of producing square, triangular, and sine waveforms using UA741 operational amplifiers on a breadboard. The square wave is generated through a Schmitt trigger circuit, which then feeds an integrator circuit to create the triangular wave. Finally, a Wien bridge oscillator produces the sine wave. The goal is to create an affordable and educationally useful waveform generator leveraging basic analog electronics components such as resistors, capacitors, and jumper wires. This report discusses the theoretical background, circuit construction, experimental results, encountered challenges, and potential improvements.**

***Index Terms*—Mixed signal generator, operational amplifier, UA741, Schmitt trigger, triangular wave, Wien bridge oscillator, breadboard.**

I. Introduction

Mixed signal generators produce multiple standard waveforms—square, triangular, and sine waves—that are essential for testing and calibration in analog and digital electronic systems. This project demonstrates hardware implementation of such a generator exclusively using UA741 op-amps, passive components, and a breadboard. The motivation lies in providing an accessible tool for practical learning and experimentation within digital electronics and pulse technique courses.

II. Implementation

A. Theory

The system consists of three main stages:

1) Square Wave Generation: A Schmitt trigger circuit built with a UA741 op-amp employs positive feedback to produce sharp transitions and hysteresis, generating a clean square wave output.

2) Triangular Wave Generation: The square wave output is integrated via an op-amp integrator circuit. The integration of the square wave results in a linear ramp up and down—a triangular waveform.

3) Sine Wave Generation: A Wien bridge oscillator circuit based on the UA741 implements a frequency-selective feedback network, producing stable sinusoidal oscillations.

B. Hardware Components

- UA741 Operational Amplifiers
- Resistors (various standard values)
- Capacitors (non-polarized)
- Breadboard
- Jumper wires
- Potentiometer (0 to 100k)
- DC power supply (±15 V typical)

C. Circuit Setup and Photos

The circuits were constructed on a breadboard, carefully connecting op-amps, resistors, and capacitors according to theoretical designs.

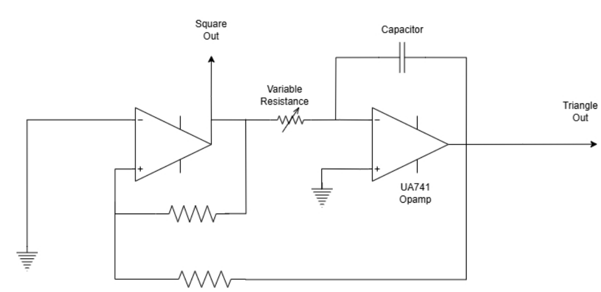


Fig. 1: Schmitt trigger circuit generating square wave and triangular wave.

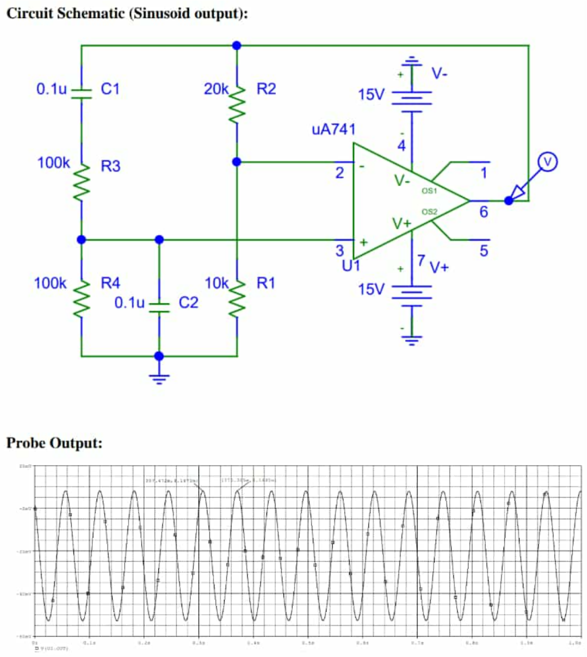
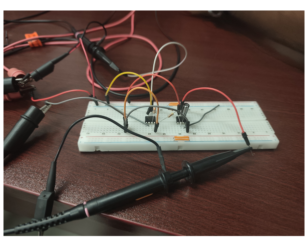


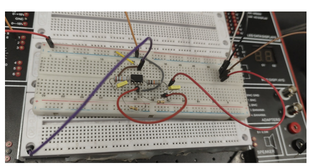
Fig. 2: The Wien bridge oscillator generating sine wave.

D. Additional Circuit and Output Photos

To provide more details on the hardware setup and signal generation, the following photos are included: two showing the physical circuit builds and two showing oscilloscope waveforms of the outputs.

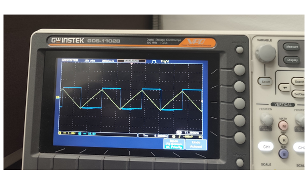


(a) Schmitt trigger circuit build

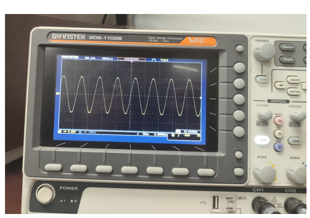


(b) Wien bridge oscillator circuit build

Fig. 3: Circuit assembly photos on breadboard



(a) Square and triangular wave output



(b) Sine wave output from Wien bridge oscillator

Fig. 4: Oscilloscope screenshots of generated waveforms

E. Experimental Observations

- The Schmitt trigger produced a stable square wave with well-defined transitions.
- Feeding the square wave to the integrator resulted in a clean triangular wave output.
- The Wien bridge oscillator generated a relatively pure sine wave after careful tuning of component values to stabilize amplitude and frequency.

F. Challenges and Solutions

- *Stabilizing the Wien bridge oscillator:* Initially, the sine wave output distorted due to amplitude instability. This was mitigated by adjusting the resistor ratio and adding a small incandescent bulb for automatic gain control.
- *Initially, we used polarized capacitors, which resulted in no output. After switching to non-polar capacitors, we obtained a perfect sine wave.*
- *Breadboard wiring complexity:* Excess leads and long jumper wires introduced noise; shorter jumpers and neat layout minimized interference.
- *Component tolerances:* Variations in passive components necessitated empirical tuning of resistor and capacitor values to achieve desired frequencies.

III. Conclusion

The project successfully implemented a hardware-only mixed signal generator producing square, triangular, and sine waves using UA741 op-amps on a breadboard. The practical experience reinforced core analog electronics concepts and waveform synthesis techniques. Future improvements could include integrating digital frequency adjustment, adding amplitude control, and expanding to additional waveforms such as sawtooth or PWM signals.

Acknowledgment

We sincerely thank our course instructors and laboratory staff for their continuous support and guidance.

References

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