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United States Patent	12393067
Kind Code	B2
Date of Patent	August 19, 2025
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Driver circuit for suppressing variations in slew rate

Abstract

In a driver circuit, a bias voltage generation circuit generates and outputs a bias voltage for determining a bias current of an output amplifier. A memory stores a trimming code with which a slew rate of an output voltage outputted by the output amplifier is adjusted to fall within a target range set in advance. In an adjustment mode for adjusting the slew rate, a slew rate adjustment circuit adjusts the slew rate of the output amplifier based on a trimming code inputted from a shipping inspection device. Then, in a normal operation mode, the slew rate adjustment circuit changes a resistance value based on the trimming code stored in the memory to change a bias level of the bias voltage generation circuit and adjust the slew rate of the output amplifier.

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Appl. No.:	18/592525
Filed:	March 01, 2024

Prior Publication Data

Document Identifier	Publication Date
US 20240295764 A1	Sep. 05, 2024

Foreign Application Priority Data

JP	2023-033214	Mar. 03, 2023
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Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: G09G3/36 (20060101); **G02F1/133** (20060101); **H03K17/687** (20060101)

U.S. Cl.:

CPC **G02F1/13306** (20130101); **G09G3/3648** (20130101); **H03K17/687** (20130101);
G09G2310/0291 (20130101); G09G2320/0233 (20130101); G09G2320/041 (20130101)

Field of Classification Search

CPC: G02F (1/13306); G09G (3/3648); G09G (2310/0291); G09G (2320/0233); G09G
(2320/041); H03K (17/687)

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

(1) This application claims the priority benefit of Japan application serial no. 2023-033214, filed on Mar. 3, 2023. The entirety of the above-mentioned patent application is hereby incorporated by reference herein and made a part of this specification.

BACKGROUND

Technical Field

(2) The disclosure relates to a driver circuit.

Related Art

(3) In recent years, with the increase in the resolution of liquid crystal display panels used for display, a liquid crystal display panel is generally divided and driven in block units by a plurality of driver ICs arranged in a cascade configuration.

(4) Thus, there is an increasing demand for a higher write speed for liquid crystal display panels, and the write time to the liquid crystal display panels is becoming shorter. Consequently, if the variation in the slew rate of an output amplifier becomes large among the plurality of driver ICs, a brightness difference may occur among the blocks of the liquid crystal display panel, and the display quality may deteriorate.

(5) As a method for increasing the slew rate of the output amplifier of the driver IC, for example, Patent Document 1 (Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2012-137571) discloses a method of increasing the slew rate by increasing the bias current.

(6) However, as the bias current of the output amplifier of the driver IC increases, power consumption of the driver IC increases, and there is an issue of heat generation. Thus, if the slew rate is increased by uniformly increasing the bias current of the plurality of driver ICs, it becomes difficult to drive a liquid crystal display panel using many driver ICs.

SUMMARY

(7) A driver circuit according to an embodiment of the disclosure includes an output amplifier, a bias setting circuit, a memory, and an adjustment circuit. The output amplifier outputs an output signal for driving a liquid crystal display panel. The bias setting circuit sets a bias level of the output amplifier. The memory stores a trimming code with which a slew rate of the output signal outputted by the output amplifier is adjusted to fall within a target range set in advance. In a normal operation mode, the adjustment circuit changes a resistance value based on the trimming code stored in the memory to change the bias level of the bias setting circuit and adjust the slew rate of the output amplifier.

(8) Further, another driver circuit according to an embodiment of the disclosure includes an output amplifier, a bias setting circuit, an adjustment circuit, and an automatic setting circuit. The output amplifier outputs an output signal for driving a liquid crystal display panel. The bias setting circuit sets a bias level of the output amplifier. The adjustment circuit changes a resistance value based on an inputted trimming code to change the bias level of the bias setting circuit and adjust a slew rate of the output amplifier. In an adjustment mode, the automatic setting circuit sequentially changes the trimming code outputted to the adjustment circuit and stores a trimming code with which a voltage value of the output signal after a preset time has elapsed from input of an input signal to the output amplifier becomes a target voltage set in advance, and, in a normal operation mode, the automatic setting circuit outputs the stored trimming code to the adjustment circuit.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

(1) FIG. 1 is a view showing a liquid crystal display panel **100** divided into blocks respectively driven by five driver ICs **111** to **115** arranged in cascade.

(2) FIG. 2 is a diagram for illustrating execution of write to the liquid crystal display panel by the driver IC in the case where the write period is sufficiently long.

(3) FIG. 3 is a diagram for illustrating execution of write to the liquid crystal display panel by the driver IC in the case where the write period is short.

(4) FIG. 4 is a diagram for illustrating execution of write to the liquid crystal display panel by two driver ICs **111** and **112** with slew rates different from each other.

(5) FIG. 5 is a diagram for illustrating occurrence of brightness differences among blocks in the

case of driving the liquid crystal display panel **100** by blocks using the plurality of driver ICs **111** to **115**.

(6) FIG. **6** is a block diagram of a driver IC **10** according to a first embodiment of the disclosure.

(7) FIG. **7** is a diagram showing an example of an output waveform during slew rate adjustment.

(8) FIG. **8** is an enlarged view around a rise time of an input voltage in FIG. **7**.

(9) FIG. **9** is a diagram for illustrating an operation of the driver IC **10** after slew rate adjustment.

(10) FIG. **10** is a block diagram of a driver IC **10A** according to a second embodiment of the disclosure.

(11) FIG. **11** is a block diagram showing a configuration of a slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** in FIG. **10**.

(12) FIG. **12** is a diagram showing a structure of one frame of signal when the driver IC drives display of the liquid crystal display panel.

(13) FIG. **13** is a diagram for illustrating execution of a slew rate adjustment **1**.

(14) FIG. **14** is a diagram for illustrating execution of a slew rate adjustment **2**.

(15) FIG. **15** is a diagram for illustrating execution of a slew rate adjustment **3**.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

(16) Embodiments of the disclosure provide a driver circuit capable of suppressing variations in the slew rate among a plurality of driver circuits to a specific range without uniformly increasing the bias current to increase the slew rate.

(17) Next, embodiments of the disclosure will be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

(18) First, before illustrating a driver IC (driver circuit) of this embodiment, FIG. **1** shows driving of a liquid crystal display panel using a plurality of driver ICs.

(19) FIG. **1** shows that a liquid crystal display panel **100** is divided into blocks, and the blocks are respectively driven by five driver ICs **111** to **115** arranged in a cascade.

(20) In the case of performing write of an image to a liquid crystal display panel from such driver ICs, the write period for performing the write is controlled according to a write timing signal. Specifically, it is required to perform write from the driver IC to the liquid crystal display panel during the write period in which the write timing signal is at the low level (hereinafter abbreviated as an L level). Then, the output voltage of the driver IC at the end of the write period will be written to the liquid crystal display panel.

(21) Herein, in the case where the write period is sufficiently long, as shown in FIG. **2**, the output voltage of the driver IC converges to a target value intended to be written, so the write to the liquid crystal display panel is performed based on the voltage serving as the target value.

(22) However, as the write speed of the liquid crystal display panel increases, this write period becomes shorter. As the write period becomes shorter, as shown in FIG. **3**, there may be cases where the write period ends before the output voltage of the driver IC converges to the target value. As a result, the write to the liquid crystal display panel will be performed based on a voltage different from the voltage serving as the target voltage.

(23) In addition, slew rates of a plurality of driver ICs differ from each other due to manufacturing variations or the like. As the variation in the slew rate among the plurality of driver ICs becomes large, there may be problems with the image displayed on the liquid crystal display panel.

(24) For example, as shown in FIG. **4**, a case where the slew rate of the driver IC **111** is high and the slew rate of the driver IC **112** is low will be illustrated.

(25) Due to the difference in the slew rate of the driver IC **111** and the slew rate of the driver IC **112**, a difference occurs in the rise of the output voltage, and a difference also occurs in the time for reaching convergence of the output voltage to the voltage serving as the target voltage. As a result, as shown in FIG. **4**, when the write period is short, even if the target value of the output voltage is the same, the voltage value at the end of the write period will be different from each other.

(26) As a result, as shown in FIG. **5**, in the case of driving the liquid crystal display panel **100** block by block using the plurality of driver ICs **111** to **115**, even if an attempt is made to display all

blocks with the same brightness, a brightness difference occurs among the blocks and the display quality deteriorates.

First Embodiment

(27) Next, a block diagram of a driver IC **10** according to a first embodiment of the disclosure is shown in FIG. **6**.

(28) As shown in FIG. **6**, the driver IC **10** of this embodiment includes an output amplifier **11** that outputs an output signal for driving a liquid crystal display panel, a bias voltage generation circuit **12**, a memory **13**, and a slew rate adjustment circuit **20**.

(29) The bias voltage generation circuit **12** functions as a bias setting circuit that sets the bias level of the output amplifier **11**. Specifically, the bias voltage generation circuit **12** generates and outputs a bias voltage for determining the bias current of the output amplifier **11**. The bias current of the output amplifier **11** is determined based on the bias voltage from the bias voltage generation circuit **12**.

(30) The memory **13** is composed of a non-volatile memory element such as a fuse element or an erasable programmable read only memory (EPROM). The memory **13** stores a trimming code with which the slew rate of the output voltage outputted by the output amplifier **11** is adjusted to fall within a target range set in advance.

(31) In this embodiment, the slew rate of the driver IC **10** is adjusted by a shipping inspection device **60** during shipping inspection of the driver IC **10**.

(32) In an adjustment mode for adjusting the slew rate, the slew rate adjustment circuit **20** adjusts the slew rate of the output amplifier **11** based on the trimming code received from the shipping inspection device **60** outside the driver IC **10**.

(33) In a normal operation mode, the slew rate adjustment circuit **20** changes the resistance value based on the trimming code stored in the memory **13** to thereby change the bias voltage of the bias voltage generation circuit **12** and adjust the slew rate of the output amplifier **11**.

(34) The slew rate adjustment circuit **20** is composed of a selector **21** and a variable resistance circuit **22**.

(35) The variable resistance circuit **22** is composed of, for example, a plurality of resistor elements and a plurality of switch elements. The plurality of resistor elements have resistance values different from each other and each have one terminal connected to the bias voltage generation circuit **12**. The plurality of switch elements are connected between the other terminals of the plurality of resistor elements and ground. The variable resistance circuit **22** is configured to turn on any of the plurality of switch elements based on a selection signal from the selector **21**.

(36) The selector **21** is configured to control on or off of each of the plurality of switch elements in the variable resistance circuit **22** by switching the selection signal outputted to the variable resistance circuit **22**. In the adjustment mode, the selector **21** switches the selection signal outputted to the variable resistance circuit **22** based on the trimming code from the shipping inspection device **60**. Further, in the normal operation mode, the selector **21** switches the selection signal outputted to the variable resistance circuit **22** based on the trimming code read from the memory **13**.

(37) The variable resistance circuit **22** is connected between the drain terminal of the FET in the bias voltage generation circuit **12** and ground. Thus, the bias voltage generated by the bias voltage generation circuit **12** also changes due to changes in the resistance value of the variable resistance circuit **22**.

(38) Next, an operation when adjusting the slew rate of the driver IC **10** by the shipping inspection device **60** during shipping inspection of the driver IC **10** will be described.

(39) First, the shipping inspection device **60** inputs an input waveform as shown in FIG. **7** as an input voltage of the output amplifier **11**. Then, as shown in FIG. **7**, the output amplifier **11** outputs an output voltage with a waveform changed according to the slew rate of the output amplifier **11**.

(40) FIG. **8** shows an enlarged view around the rise time of this input voltage in FIG. **7**.

(41) (A) of FIG. **8** shows the waveform of the input voltage of the output amplifier **11**. Herein,

when adjusting the slew rate, the target waveform of the output voltage serving as the target is shown in (B) of FIG. 8 and slew rate adjustment is performed. Specifically, a waveform in which the voltage after time T has elapsed from the rise of the input voltage converges within a range set in advance, for example, within a range from 0.9 times the target voltage to the target voltage, is set as the target waveform.

(42) Herein, it is assumed that the waveform of the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** is the waveform as shown in (C) of FIG. 8. In the waveform shown in (C) of FIG. 8, the voltage after time T has elapsed does not converge within the range from 0.9 times the target voltage to the target voltage. Thus, the shipping inspection device **60** changes the trimming code outputted to the selector **21** such that the slew rate increases, and performs slew rate adjustment such that the voltage after time T has elapsed converges within the range from 0.9 times the target voltage to the target voltage.

(43) When such slew rate adjustment is completed, the shipping inspection device **60** writes, to the memory **13**, the trimming code of the time when the slew rate has converged within the target range, and ends shipping inspection.

(44) In the driver IC **10** after shipment, the slew rate of the output amplifier **11** is set based on the trimming code written in the memory **13**. Referring to FIG. 9, an operation of the driver IC **10** after slew rate adjustment will be described.

(45) In the driver IC **10** after shipment, as shown in FIG. 9, the selector **21** performs switching of the variable resistance circuit **22** based on the trimming code read from the memory **13**. As a result, the slew rate of the output amplifier **11** becomes the slew rate of a predetermined range adjusted at the time of shipping inspection.

(46) By performing slew rate adjustment of each driver IC during shipping inspection of the driver IC in this manner, the variation in the slew rate among all driver ICs to be shipped will be suppressed within a specific range.

Second Embodiment

(47) Next, a block diagram of a driver IC **10A** according to a second embodiment of the disclosure is shown in FIG. 10.

(48) In the driver IC **10** according to the first embodiment described above, the slew rate is adjusted to be within a predetermined range at the time of shipping inspection. However, in the case where the slew rate changes after shipping of the driver IC **10**, the slew rate will remain in a changed state.

(49) Thus, the driver IC **10A** according to this embodiment is designed to perform slew rate adjustment even in a normal operation condition after shipment.

(50) As shown in FIG. 10, the driver IC **10A** according to this embodiment has a configuration in which the memory **13** is replaced with a slew rate automatic setting circuit **30**.

(51) In an adjustment mode, the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** sequentially changes the trimming code outputted to the slew rate adjustment circuit **20**, and stores the trimming code with which the voltage value of an output signal after a preset time has elapsed from input of an input signal to the output amplifier **11** becomes a target voltage set in advance. Then, in a normal operation mode, the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** operates to output the stored trimming code to the slew rate adjustment circuit **20**.

(52) The configuration of the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** in FIG. 10 is shown in the block diagram of FIG. 11.

(53) As shown in FIG. 11, the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** includes a comparator **31**, a counter circuit **32**, a trimming code generation circuit **33**, and a code latch part **34**.

(54) Upon receiving a clock signal CLK, the counter circuit **32** outputs a standby signal STB after a preset period has elapsed.

(55) The comparator **31** compares the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** with the target voltage. Then, at a time when the comparator **31** receives the standby signal STB from the counter

circuit **32**, if the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** and the target voltage match, the comparator **31** changes the logic of a latch signal **40** being outputted from the H level to the L level. In other words, the comparator **31** is configured to compare, with the voltage value of the target voltage set in advance, the voltage value of the output signal after a preset time has elapsed from when an input signal is inputted to the output amplifier **11**.

(56) In the adjustment mode in which slew rate adjustment is performed, the trimming code generation circuit **33** sequentially changes and generates trimming codes.

(57) In the adjustment mode, the code latch part **34** outputs the trimming code generated by the trimming code generation circuit **33** to the selector **21**, and latches the trimming code when the latch signal **40** changes from the H level to the L level.

(58) In other words, the code latch part **34** latches and stores the trimming code of a time when the latch signal **40**, which is the output of the comparator **31**, becomes the L level indicating that two voltage values have matched. Then, in the normal operation mode, the code latch part **34** outputs the latched trimming code to the selector **21**.

(59) The slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** turns into the adjustment mode during a V blank period (vertical blanking interval) in the output signal for driving the liquid crystal display panel, and updates the trimming code stored in the code latch part **34** to a trimming code with which the slew rate falls within the target range set in advance.

(60) FIG. **12** shows the structure of one frame of signal when the driver IC drives display of the liquid crystal display panel. The one frame of signal includes an initial period, a display period, and a V blank period.

(61) The slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** performs slew rate adjustment for each line during the V blank period composed of a plurality of lines. Specifically, the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** changes a trimming code for each line to perform slew rate adjustment, and when the adjusted slew rate is within the predetermined range as the target, the slew rate automatic setting circuit **30** newly holds the trimming code at this time in the code latch part **34**.

(62) FIG. **13** to FIG. **15** show sequential execution of slew rate adjustments **1**, **2**, **3**, etc. during the V blank period.

(63) First, FIG. **13** shows execution of the slew rate adjustment **1**. In this slew rate adjustment **1**, because the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** at the time when the standby signal STB is outputted has not reached the target voltage, the latch signal **40** outputted from the comparator **31** remains at the H level.

(64) Next, FIG. **14** shows the slew rate adjustment **2** to be performed next. In this slew rate adjustment **2**, due to the change in the trimming code, the slew rate after the change is higher than in the case of the slew rate adjustment **1**. However, since the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** at the time when the standby signal STB is outputted has not yet reached the target voltage, the latch signal **40** outputted from the comparator **31** remains at the H level.

(65) Then, FIG. **15** shows the slew rate adjustment **3** to be performed next. In this slew rate adjustment **3**, due to the change in the trimming code, the slew rate after the change is even higher than in the case of the slew rate adjustment **2**. Thus, since the output voltage of the output amplifier **11** at the time when the standby signal STB is outputted is larger than the target voltage, the latch signal **40** outputted from the comparator **31** changes from the H level to the L level.

(66) As a result, the trimming code at the time of the slew rate adjustment **3** is newly held in the code latch part **34**.

(67) In this manner, in the driver IC **10A** according to this embodiment, slew rate adjustment is regularly performed during the V blank period in the normal operation. Thus, according to the driver IC **10A** of this embodiment, even if characteristics of the output amplifier **11** change due to aging or other factors, slew rate adjustment is permanently performed and the slew rate converges within the predetermined range.

Claims

1. A driver circuit comprising: an output amplifier that outputs an output signal for driving a liquid crystal display panel; a bias setting circuit that sets a bias level of the output amplifier; an automatic setting circuit that outputs a trimming code; and an adjustment circuit that changes a resistance value based on the trimming code inputted from the automatic setting circuit to change the bias level of the bias setting circuit and adjust a slew rate of the output amplifier, in an adjustment mode, the automatic setting circuit sequentially changes the trimming code outputted to the adjustment circuit and stores a trimming code with which a voltage value of the output signal after a preset time has elapsed from input of an input signal to the output amplifier becomes a target voltage set in advance, and, in a normal operation mode, outputs the stored trimming code to the adjustment circuit, wherein the automatic setting circuit comprises a comparator that compares, with a voltage value of the target voltage set in advance, the voltage value of the output signal after the preset time has elapsed from input of the input signal to the output amplifier, and the automatic setting circuit stores a trimming code of a time when output of the comparator becomes a logic indicating that the two voltage values match.
 2. The driver circuit according to claim 1, wherein the automatic setting circuit turns into the adjustment mode during a vertical blanking interval in the output signal for driving the liquid crystal display panel, and updates the stored trimming code to a trimming code with which the slew rate falls within a target range set in advance.
 3. The driver circuit according to claim 1, wherein the adjustment circuit comprises: a plurality of resistor elements that have resistance values different from each other and each have one terminal connected to the bias setting circuit; a plurality of switch elements that are connected between other terminals of the plurality of resistor elements and ground; and a selector that controls on or off of each of the plurality of switch elements.
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