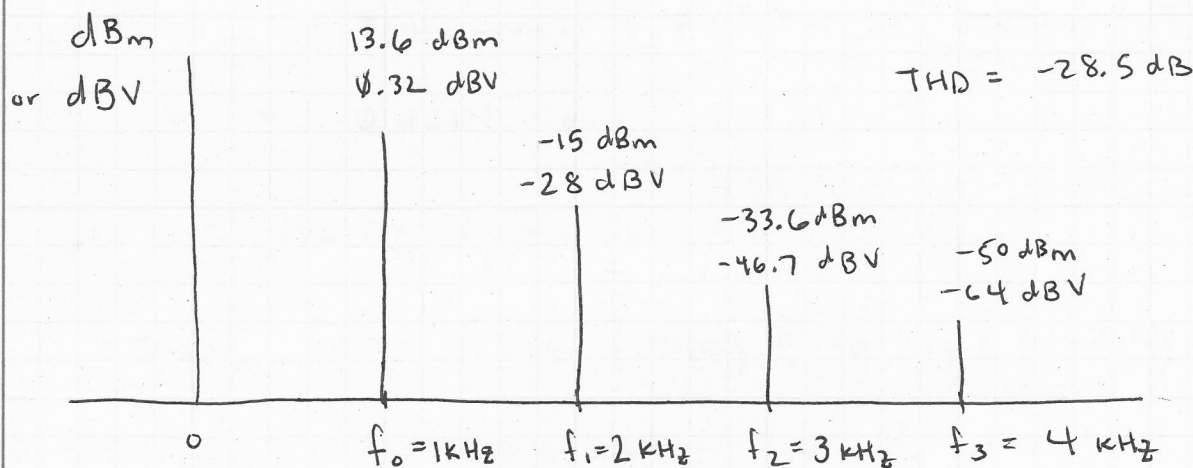


From the HP Signal Analyzer you can determine the frequency content of your output signal and associated harmonic distortion. For example the data below results from the $3V_{pp}$ output of my cascaded amplifier



Note $\text{dBV} = 20 \log(V_{\text{rms}})$ $V_{\text{rms}} = V_{\text{amp}} / \sqrt{2}$
 $\text{dBm} = 10 \log(\text{Power})$ Power is in mW

Using the first 3 harmonics, the signal analyzer says

$$\text{THD} = -28.5 \text{ dB}$$

So what does this number mean and what % power is in the three harmonics f_1 through f_3 ?

Let's define

$$\text{THD \%} = \frac{\text{Power in harmonics}}{\text{total power}} = \frac{P(f_1) + P(f_2) + P(f_3)}{P(f_0) + P(f_1) + P(f_2) + P(f_3)}$$

$$P(f_0) = 10^{13.6/10} = 22.41 \text{ mW}$$

$$P(f_1) = 10^{-15/10} = 0.0316 \text{ mW} = 31.6 \mu\text{W}$$

$$P(f_2) = 10^{-33.6/10} = 4.37 \cdot 10^{-4} \text{ mW} = 0.437 \mu\text{W}$$

$$P(f_3) = 10^{-50/10} = 1 \cdot 10^{-5} \text{ mW} = 10 \text{ nW}$$

Convert all the dBm power to power in mW

So the power contained in first 3 harmonics is

$$P(f_1) + P(f_2) + P(f_3) = 0.0321 \text{ mW} = P_{\text{harmonics}}$$

then

$$\begin{aligned} \text{THD} &= \frac{P_{\text{harmonics}}}{P_{\text{harmonics}} + P(f_0)} = \frac{0.0321}{0.0321 + 22.91} \\ &= 0.0014 \text{ or } 0.14\% \end{aligned}$$

We can express this in dB as

$$\begin{aligned} \text{THD}_{\text{dB}} &= 10 \log(\text{THD}) = 10 \log(0.0014) \\ &= -28.5 \text{ dB} \quad \text{Q.E.D.} \end{aligned}$$

This is what the signal analyzer displayed earlier
stated another way

0.14 % of the power is in the harmonics

99.86 % of the power is at the fundamental f_0

This seems pretty good. As a point of comparison, the
Keysight function generator in the lab specifies

THD = 0.03 % on the data sheet or -35 dB.