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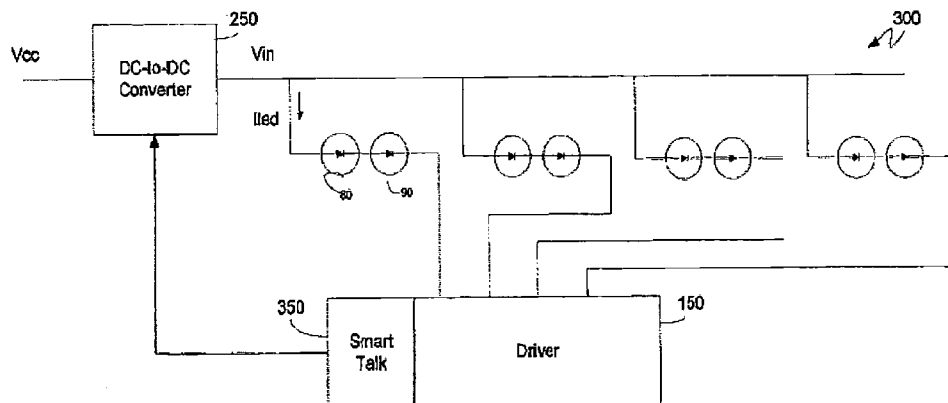
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(54) Title: SMART TALK BACKLIGHTING SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: A smart talk mechanism provides feedback information from a driver to a DC-to-DC converter, enabling the DC-to-DC converter to adjust an input voltage for at least one illumination source backlighting the display for increasing the power efficiency.

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## SMART TALK BACKLIGHTING SYSTEM AND METHOD

### CLAIM OF PRIORITY

5 [0001] U.S. Patent Application No. 11/440,757 entitled SMART TALK BACKLIGHTING SYSTEM AND METHOD, by Dimitry Goder *et al.*, filed May 25, 2006 (Attorney Docket No. SIPEX-01006US0).

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### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The invention relates generally to backlight display driver circuits, and more particularly to backlight display driver circuits with feedback mechanisms.

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### BACKGROUND

[0004] Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs) can be used for a number of applications such as in laptop and other computer displays, televisions, global positioning (GPS) units, and in personal data assistants (PDAs), and for many other applications. Conventionally, 25 Light Emitting Diodes (LED) may be used to backlight the LCD display for greater brilliance. Conventional LED backlighting suffers from a drawback, however. The use of the LEDs increases power consumption, often to the point of eliminating the advantage of using LCD technology. Accordingly, mechanisms for reducing the power consumed by LEDs used to backlight LCD displays are sought.

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### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] Preferred embodiment(s) of the present invention will be described in detail based on the following figures, wherein:

[0006] **Figure 1** illustrates an example of a driver circuit for driving LEDs used to backlight an LCD display.

[0007] **Figure 2** illustrates an improved driver circuit.

[0008] **Figure 3** illustrates an improved driver circuit employing smart talk in an embodiment.

[0009] **Figure 4A** illustrates functionality of an embodiment employing power saving feedback from the driver to the DC-to-DC converter.

[0010] **Figure 4B** illustrates functionality of an embodiment without power saving feedback from the driver to the DC-to-DC converter.

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### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0011] **Figure 1** shows a driver circuit 100, in which a driver device is used to drive LEDs used to backlight an LCD display. The driver circuit 100 can include driver device 150, which may be an SP7617 backlight driver device made by SIPEX Corporation of Milpitas, California. While many embodiments can be prepared incorporating a variety of other driver devices, the SP7617 provides a four channel low side driver having maximum 60mA current, current accuracy of about 2.5% and approximately 1% current matching between channels over a full temperature range, pulse width modulation and analog dimming control and short LED and thermal and over current protections. In operation, an input voltage **V<sub>in</sub>** is applied to each channel, causing a current of **I<sub>led</sub>** to flow through each channel and through the driver device 150. Current **I<sub>led</sub>** causes a voltage drop of **V<sub>f</sub>** across each LED 80, 90. In an example operational context having values of **V<sub>in</sub>** of 21 volts, **I<sub>led</sub>** of 20 mA per channel and **V<sub>f</sub>** of 3.5 volts, the power **P** dissipated by device driver is computed according to relationship (1):

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$$P = [21V - (2.5V \times 2)] \times (20mA \times 4) = 1.12 \text{ Watts} \quad (1)$$

[0012] **Figure 2** illustrates a modified driver circuit 200, in which a DC-to-DC converter 250 has been added in an effort to reduce power dissipation. As shown by **Figure 2**, a DC-to-DC converter, such as SP6125 by SIPEX Corporation, provides a relatively higher efficiency step down conversion from the **V<sub>in</sub>** to a preferred **V<sub>cc</sub>**. In an operational context, **V<sub>in</sub>** may be 21 volts and **V<sub>cc</sub>** may be 9 volts and DC-to-DC

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converter 250 may have an efficiency of 90%, for example, an overall efficiency of approximately 70% may be achieved according to the relationship (2):

$$E_{\text{overall}} = 90\% \times 78\% = 70\% \quad (2)$$

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[0013] It is noteworthy that embodiments of the present invention are not limited to a step-down (buck) converter, such as the SP6125, but can also enable use of step-up (boost) converters as well. Additionally, embodiments may be realized using a pulse width modulator (PWM) as a specific implementation for the DC-to-DC converter.

10 [0014] Efficiencies greater than those provided by the architectures shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 are desired. Addition of a power saving feedback from the driver to the DC-to-DC converter mechanism would result in an advantageous efficiency improvement over the architectures of Figure 1 and Figure 2.

[0015] In one embodiment shown in Figure 3, a power saving feedback from the driver to the DC-to-DC converter mechanism 350 (hereinafter, "smart talk mechanism") is coupled to the driver 150 in order to feed back adjustment information from the driver 150 to the DC-to-DC converter 250, enabling the DC-to-DC converter to adjust **V<sub>ce</sub>** to reduce the **V<sub>cathode</sub>** at the LEDs 80, 90. In an operational example, **V<sub>cathode</sub>** could be reduced to 7.3 volts by action of smart talk mechanism 350 and DC-to-DC converter 250.

20 If the efficiency of the DC-to-DC converter 250 is approximately 93% and the efficiency of driver 150 and smart talk mechanism is about 96%, for example, an overall efficiency of approximately 90% may be achieved according to the relationship (3):

$$E_{\text{overall}} = 93\% \times 96\% = 90\% \quad (3)$$

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[0016] The operation of smart talk mechanism 350 can provide improved efficiency over the circuits illustrated by Figure 1 and Figure 2. Functionality of a smart talk mechanism suitable for use in the back light display driver of Figure 3 will now be described in further detail with reference to Figures 4A – 4B.

30 [0017] Figures 4A – 4B illustrate a comparison of an embodiment employing power saving feedback from the driver to the DC-to-DC converter provided by a smart talk mechanism with an embodiment without the power saving feedback. As shown by Figure

4A, smart talk mechanism 350 is coupled to the driver 150 in order to feed back adjustment information from the driver 150 to the DC-to-DC converter 250.

[0018] In an embodiment, the DC-to-DC converter 250, by nature of its design, continuously adjusts its outputs voltage around an optimum feedback voltage. Normally, the feedback voltage for the DC-to-DC converter 250 is a directly scaled version of the output voltage. The smart talk mechanism will take the information of the anode voltage (at the driver output) and feed that back to the DC-to-DC converter 250. This information can be a direct anode voltage or a scaled version of it. If this feedback voltage is high, then the DC-to-DC converter 250 will decrease its output to lower the cathode voltage and hence lower the anode voltage as well. If the feedback voltage is low, then the DC-to-DC converter 250 will increase its output to raise the cathode voltage and hence raise the anode voltage as well. This mechanism will ensure the anode voltage to be at an optimum voltage which maximizes the intended power to the LEDs and reduces the power loss inside the driver.

[0019] The feedback enables the DC-to-DC converter to adjust  $V_{cc}$  to reduce the  $V_{in}$  at the cathode end of LED 80 from 9.0V, as shown by Figure 4B, to 7.3V shown in Figure 4A. The voltage drop across LEDs 80, 90 is reduced from a maximum value of 4.0V in Figure 4B to a nominal value of 3.5V in Figure 4A. Finally, voltage across a driver transistor within driver 150 can be dropped from 1.0V in Figure 4B to 0.3V in Figure 4A. These and other benefits provided by embodiments employing a smart talk mechanism can improve efficiency, reduce power dissipation, enhance battery life and so forth.

[0020] Embodiments providing a larger quantity of channel drivers may be created using the techniques described above to reduce power dissipation in the device driver. For example, and without limitation, embodiments having four, eight or larger quantities of channel drivers may be realized in accordance with the techniques described herein. In embodiments, input power is derived from one or more of a battery and an AC adapter. According to embodiments, the efficiency of a backlight LED driver is increased from about 33% to about 90% and power dissipation is reduced by approximately 64%.

[0021] The foregoing description of the present invention has been provided for the purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to the practitioner skilled in the art. Particularly, it will be evident that the above-

described features of detecting and ranking images with numerical ranks in order of usefulness based on vignette score can be incorporated into other types of software applications beyond those described. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, thereby

5 enabling others skilled in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments and with various modifications that are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the following claims and their equivalents.

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A circuit to drive a backlight for a display comprising:  
5 a backlight device driver;  
a DC-to-DC converter; and  
a smart talk mechanism to feed back adjustment information from the driver to the  
DC-to-DC converter, thereby enabling the DC-to-DC converter to adjust an  
input voltage for at least one illumination source backlighting the display  
10 for increasing the power efficiency.
2. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the backlight device driver drives a light emitting  
diode (LED) back light for a liquid crystal display (LCD).
3. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the smart talk mechanism enables adjusting the  
voltage applied to at least one light emitting diode (LED) backlighting the display.
- 15 4. The circuit of claim 3, wherein the smart talk mechanism enables adjusting the  
voltage applied to the cathode of at least one light emitting diode (LED) backlighting the  
display.
5. The circuit of claim 1, further comprising the smart talk mechanism sensing at  
least one of power dissipation, current and voltage of the driver.
- 20 6. The circuit of claim 5, further comprising determining by the smart talk  
mechanism an appropriate feedback to the DC-to-DC converter based upon the at least one  
of power dissipation, current and voltage of the driver.
7. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the display includes a liquid crystal display (LCD).
8. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the driver comprises a multi-channel driver.
- 25 9. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the DC-to-DC converter adjusts a voltage to the  
backlight of the display.
10. The circuit of claim 1, wherein input power is derived from at least one of a battery  
and an AC adapter.
11. The circuit of claim 1, wherein the DC-to-DC converter comprises a pulse width  
30 modulator (PWM).

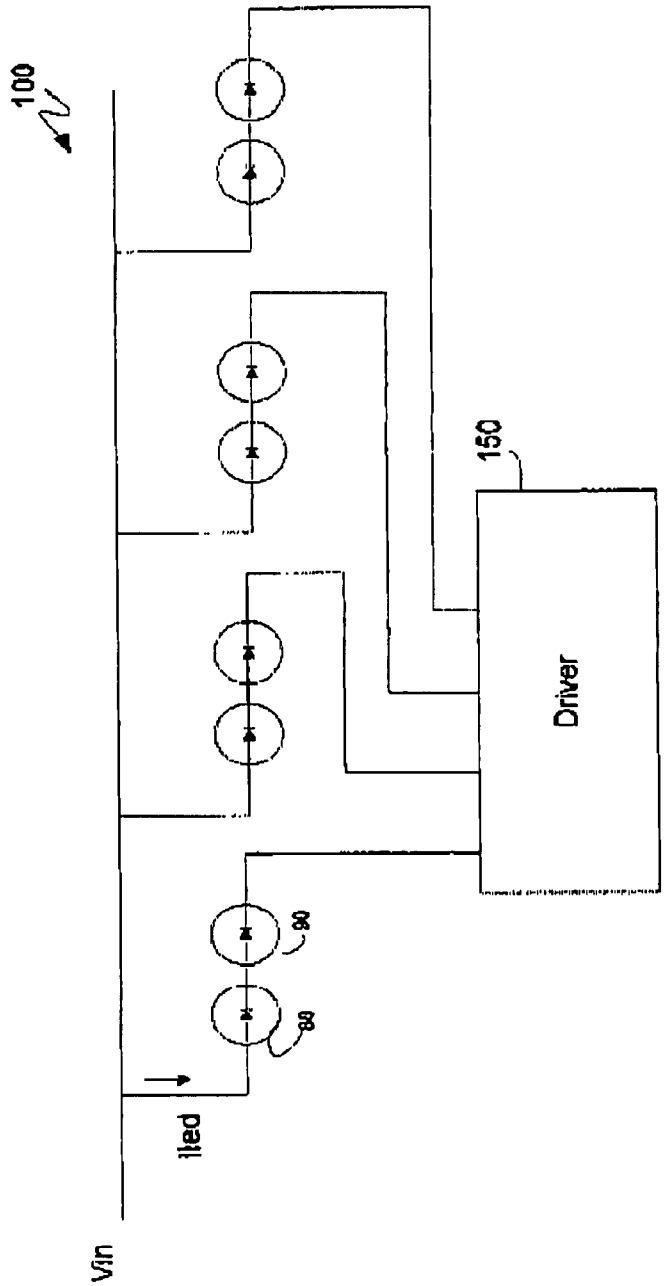


Figure 1

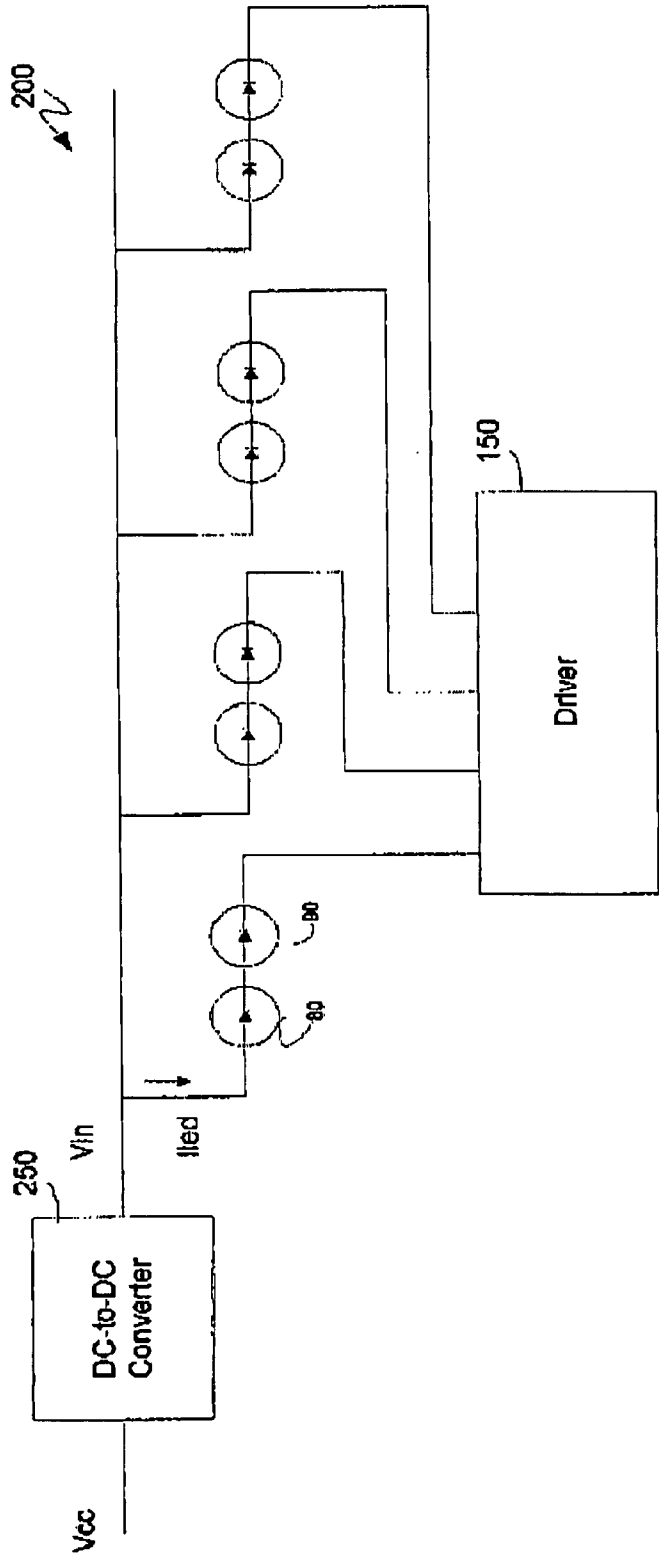


Figure 2

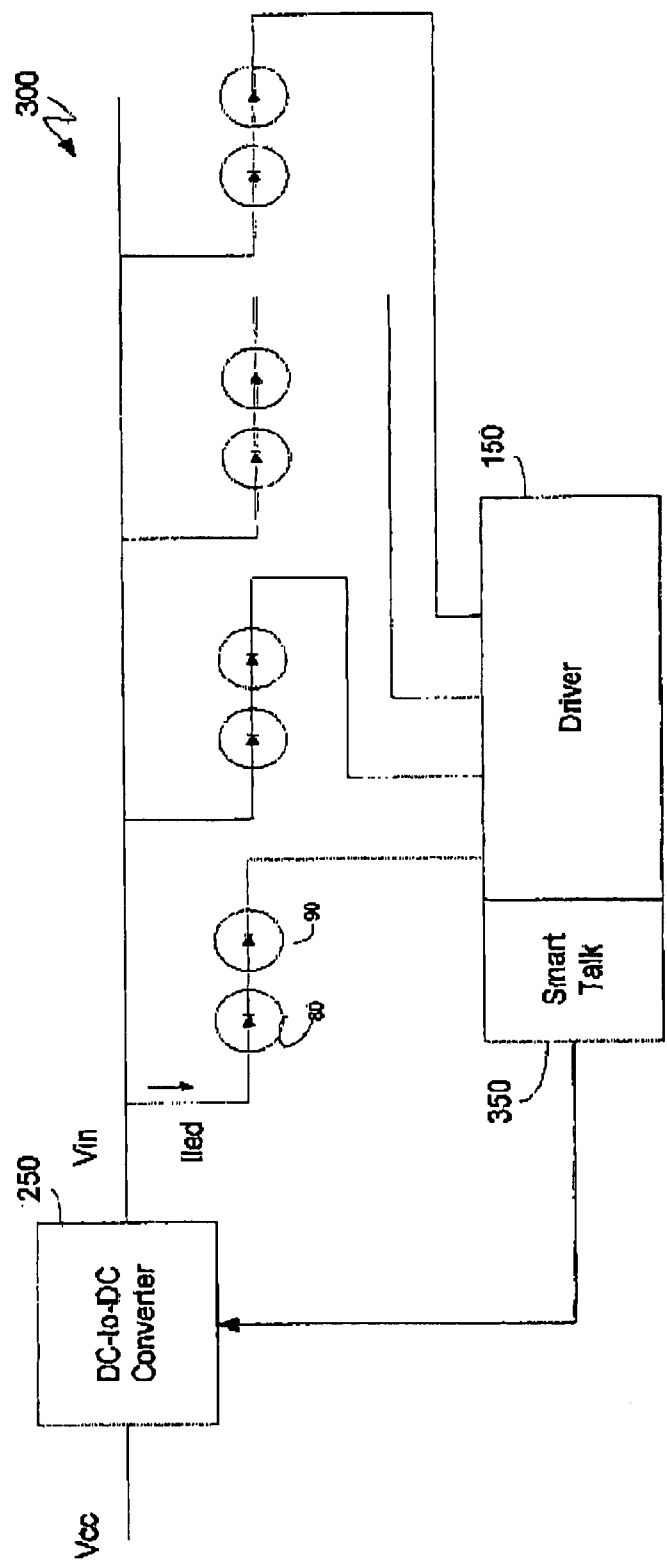


Figure 3

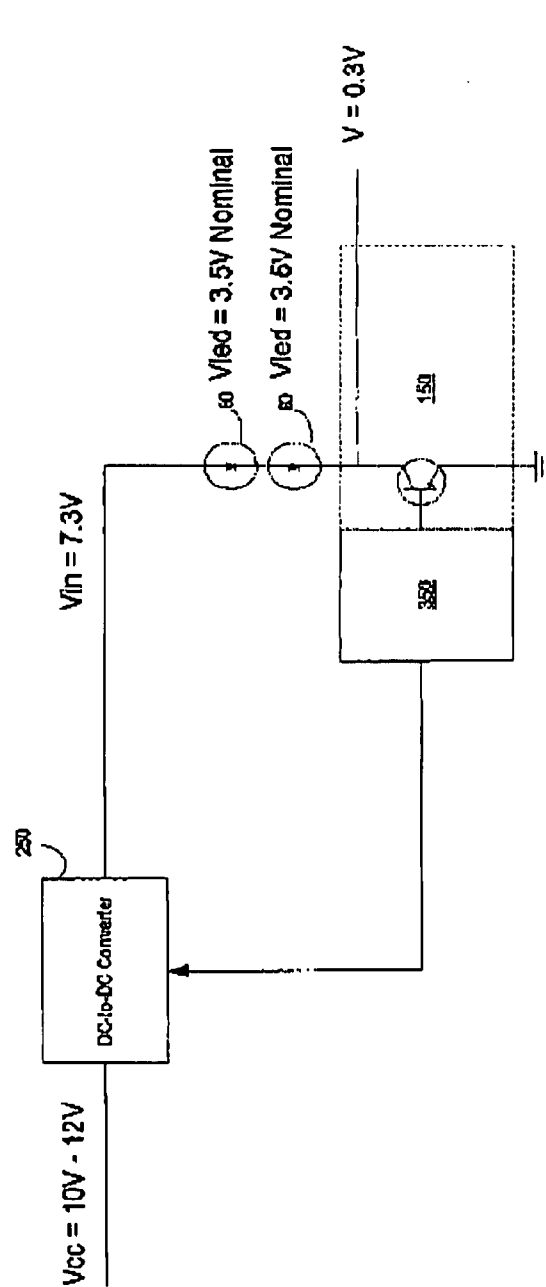


Figure 4A

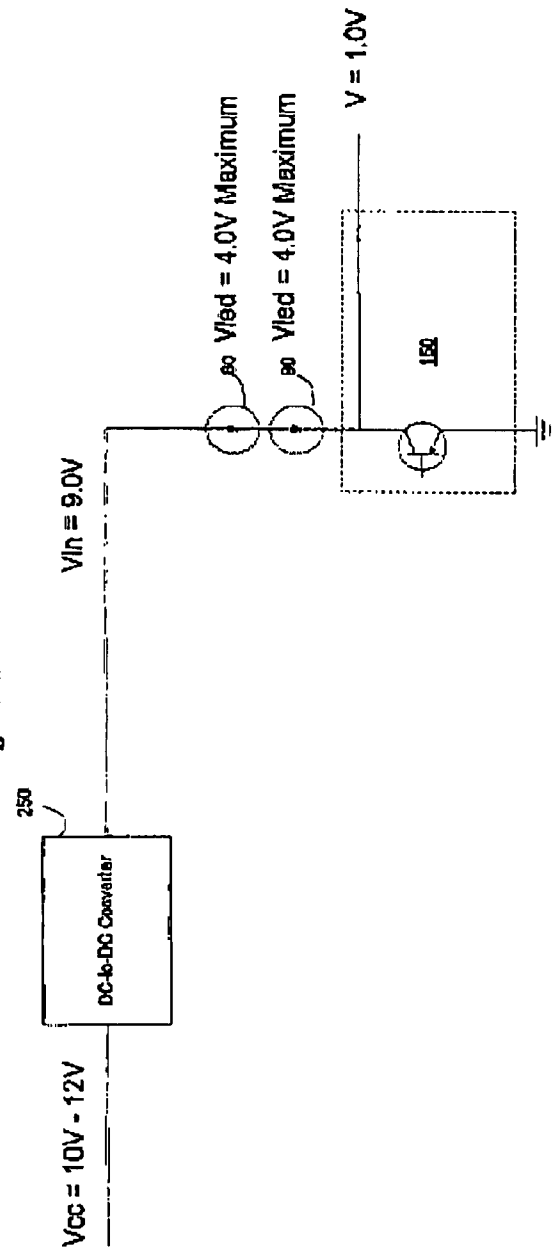


Figure 4B