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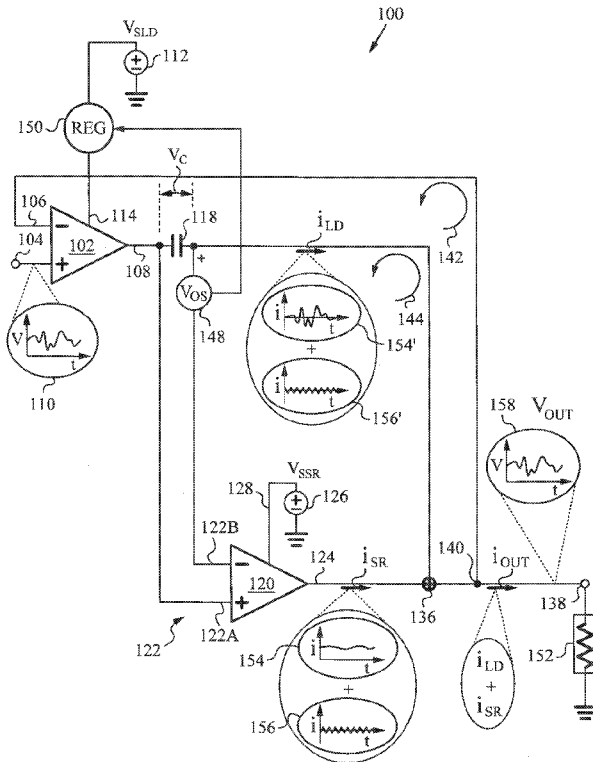


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: A highly efficient, high control bandwidth and high-speed power supply uses a linear driver and a switching regulator for regulating an output based on a control signal. The linear driver has a first input for receiving the control signal and a second input connected to the output for receiving negative feedback. The driver's output is controlled by its two inputs and has a capacitor connected in series with it to generate a capacitor voltage V_c responsive to the DC and low frequency components in the driver's output. The switching regulator has a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop. The control input receives capacitor voltage V_c and the regulator feedback loop minimizes capacitor voltage V_c . Thus, the switching regulator takes over the generation of DC and low frequency components, while the linear driver provides high frequency output current components.



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DYNAMIC POWER SUPPLY EMPLOYING A LINEAR DRIVER AND A SWITCHING REGULATOR

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to U.S. Application entitled “Low-Noise, High Bandwidth Quasi-Resonant Mode Switching Power Supply” filed on the same date.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to dynamic power supplies utilizing linear drivers and switching regulators to provide output at high power efficiencies and over wide bandwidths.

BACKGROUND ART

There is often a need for a power supply circuit that is capable of delivering power with high frequency components (fast, dynamically changing voltage and current), at high overall power conversion efficiency. For example, a radio frequency (RF) power amplifier (PA), i.e., an RF PA, can be fed by an efficient power supply at a reduced voltage, allowing the PA to operate more efficiently (i.e., with lower power consumption).

In an envelope tracking system, the power supply feeds the PA with a variable voltage that tracks the output power envelope of the PA. This provides for a reduced voltage while still maintaining enough operating headroom for the PA’s output stage to prevent saturation. Note that the power supply must be capable of changing the output voltage very quickly to accommodate rapid changes in the output power envelope of the PA. At the same time, a high overall efficiency is desired in the power supply to achieve the desired lower power consumption.

A typical switched-mode power supply (SMPS) circuit achieves high efficiency. Unfortunately, it cannot deliver sufficiently high frequency components of the power, because the low switching frequencies commonly used in these types of regulators (a limitation largely imposed by the magnetic and switching losses) bound the regulator’s bandwidth. Linear regulators, on the other hand, may be designed to deliver high frequency components, but the power conversion efficiency of such linear regulators is poor. Thus neither a common SMPS nor a linear regulator can meet this need.

Another example of the need for a power supply that is both efficient and can deliver a fast changing voltage and current is one that supplies a digital circuit, which may include a microprocessor. The digital circuit may operate more efficiently if fed by a power supply that adjusts its voltage dynamically to match the predicted processing needs.

Typically, the voltage is adjusted upward when the digital circuit is operating at high speeds, and downward when operating at lower speeds. While conventional power supplies can typically change their voltage within 50 ms, this delay may prevent the digital circuitry from operating at peak efficiency. A power supply that adjusts its voltage more quickly to allow for a more frequent change in clocking speeds of the digital circuitry is desirable.

Further, minimal or low voltage ripple is desirable in switching power supplies. For example, modern microprocessors are increasingly operated at low voltages due to increased chip density and lower voltage breakdown in advanced CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor) technology. At these low voltages, the power supply ripple may be a substantial portion of the supply voltage. High ripple may undesirably require the power supply output voltage to be raised above the optimal level in order to ensure that the microprocessor is supplied with the minimal voltage required during periods when the ripple voltage drives the voltage excursions to a minimum. As an additional example, an RF PA requires its power supply to exhibit low ripple at its output. Ripple typically occurs synchronously with the switching frequency of the switching regulator and can feed through to the output of the PA, causing unwanted distortion in the RF output signal.

There have been some efforts to improve the conventional switching regulator circuits. For example, some prior art suggests the use of both a switching regulator and a linear regulator that feed a simple summing node to form the output of the power supply. The intention of such combination is for the linear regulator to provide the high frequency, and the switching regulator to provide the low frequency and DC components of the current to the load. These circuits, however, place a high burden on the linear regulator, as it requires the linear regulator to supply a large amount of excess current to modulate the voltage in the large reservoir capacitors needed by the switching regulator. Alternatively, a switching regulator and linear regulator may be placed in series, with the switching regulator's output feeding the linear regulator's input. In this arrangement, the linear regulator may be capable of delivering high frequency components of the power, while the switching regulator may deliver power efficiently to the linear regulator. However, this series arrangement forces all

the power delivered to the load to pass through the linear regulator, causing power dissipation in the linear regulator and substantially reducing the overall efficiency of the power supply.

Therefore, there remains a need for a dynamic power supply system that has high overall efficiency, high bandwidth, and low voltage ripple.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The objects and advantages of the invention are secured by a dynamic power supply for regulating a power output by a control signal. The dynamic power supply has a linear driver with a first driver input, a second driver input and a driver output. The first driver input is connected to receive the control signal, which has a certain bandwidth and includes DC. The second driver input is connected to the power output for receiving a negative feedback. The driver output generates a driver output current in response to its two driver inputs.

The dynamic power supply has a capacitor connected in series with the driver output for generating a capacitor voltage that is responsive to the DC and low frequency current components present in the driver output. The dynamic power supply is further equipped with a switching regulator having a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop. Now, the control input of the switching regulator is connected to receive the capacitor voltage and the regulator feedback loop is designed to minimize the capacitor voltage. More specifically, the switching regulator attempts to counteract the capacitor voltage at its regulator output. To accomplish this, the switching regulator generates at its regulator output current that forces the DC current component of the capacitor to be zero. The result is that switching regulator contributes DC and low frequency current components to the power output.

The power output of the dynamic power supply is obtained by combining the driver output current and the regulator output current. A combiner located before the power output performs the corresponding current combining task. In practice, a wired summing node is an appropriate implementation of a combiner.

In one specific embodiment, the switching regulator is a step-down buck regulator. In the same or a different embodiment, the linear driver is a push-pull type linear driver. Of course, any suitable DC-DC regulator, also referred to as switched-mode power supply (SMPS) or simply switcher by those skilled in the art may be employed by the dynamic power supply of the invention. The same is true for the choice of linear driver, also referred to as a linear regulator.

In a preferred embodiment, the control input of the switching regulator that receives the capacitor voltage further receives a voltage offset. The voltage offset is produced by an offset voltage source, summed with the capacitor voltage and applied to the control input. The addition of the voltage offset at the control input generates a desirable DC offset in the driver output. Preferably, the dynamic power supply also has a regulator for efficiently stepping down a driver supply voltage from a first input voltage source based on that DC offset. In other words, the driver supply voltage can be reduced in this embodiment.

In many embodiments, the first input voltage source is a battery, e.g., when the dynamic power supply is deployed in a mobile and power-efficient device. In these cases, the driver supply voltage can be stepped-down with an efficient switching regulator, thus improving the overall efficiency of the driver. Meanwhile, the battery supplies a switching regulator supply voltage without any voltage step-down or adjustment. Alternatively, the sources may be different; i.e., the first input voltage source supplies the driver while a second input voltage source is connected to the switching regulator for supplying it with a switching regulator supply voltage higher than the driver supply voltage.

In some embodiments the dynamic power supply has a low-pass filter connected in series with the switching regulator. Such filter is positioned before the combiner.

The invention further extends to a method for regulating a power output of a dynamic power supply by a control signal. The method calls for providing a linear driver having a first driver input, a second driver input and a driver output. The first driver input is connected to receive the control signal, which has a certain bandwidth, and to output a driver output current at the driver output. The second driver input is connected to the power output for receiving a negative feedback.

Thus, the invention provides a highly efficient, high control bandwidth (dynamic) power supply in which the switching regulator provides DC and low frequency output current components at high efficiency. Meanwhile, the linear driver provides the high frequency output current components that the switching regulator cannot provide. Additionally, since the linear driver takes feedback from the power output, any voltage ripple imposed by the switching regulator within the bandwidth of the linear driver (in-band noise) is removed by the linear regulator.

In accordance with the method of invention, a capacitor is connected in series with the driver output for generating a capacitor voltage that is responsive to DC and low frequency current

components in the driver output current. A switching regulator having a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop is provided to generate a regulator output current that contains the DC and low frequency current components. This is ensured, when the control input receives the capacitor voltage and the regulator feedback loop acts to minimize the capacitor voltage by generating the desired regulator output current with the DC and low frequency current components. The regulator output current thus generated and the driver output current are combined to yield the power output.

The method of invention can be used in RF power amplifiers practicing EER (Envelope Elimination and Restoration) also known as the Kahn technique. In those embodiments, the power output is delivered to a supply voltage rail of an RF power amplifier. The control signal is an amplitude signal intended for modulation of an RF carrier. In still other embodiments, the power output is used to adjust an RF power amplifier supply voltage in accordance with the amplitude of an RF signal that is to be amplified. The RF power amplifier that amplifies the signal is thus able to operate without unnecessary voltage overhead in its supply voltage, thus reducing overall power consumption.

Furthermore, the method of invention extends to generating a voltage offset at the power output via the switching regulator. This permits operation in a mode where the peak voltage provided by the linear driver is exceeded. Preferably, a voltage offset level is provided from an offset voltage source to the control input of the switching regulator. The result is a DC offset introduced by the switching regulator and thus a reduced voltage at the driver output. It is further desirable in embodiments that introduce the voltage offset, to supply the linear driver with a lower supply voltage, correspondingly stepping down an input voltage source utilizing a switched-mode regulator such that it applies an efficient stepped-down driver supply voltage to the linear driver.

Finally, the invention extends to dynamic power supplies operating in a voltage mode. Rather than detecting the DC and low frequency current components of a current signal, in the voltage mode the dynamic power supply detects the DC and low frequency voltage components in the driver output voltage. The switching regulator has its control input and regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop, where the control input is connected to an offset voltage source and to the node.

The switching regulator then regulates its regulator output to minimize the difference between the driver output voltage and an externally-supplied offset voltage utilizing a regulator

feedback loop. More specifically, the switching regulator attempts to counteract differences between the driver output voltage and the offset voltage. To accomplish this, the switching regulator generates at its regulator output a regulator output voltage that satisfies the driver's feedback loop and thus force the driver's DC output voltage to equal the offset voltage.

A summing transformer is employed for combining the driver output voltage and the regulator output voltage to yield the power output in voltage mode embodiments. A regulator for stepping down the driver supply voltage from the first input voltage source to a lower supply voltage based on the DC offset can also be deployed in these embodiments.

Clearly, the apparatus and methods of invention find many advantageous embodiments. The details of the invention, including its preferred embodiments, are presented in the below detailed description with reference to the appended drawing figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

- Fig. 1 is a diagram of a dynamic power supply illustrating several main aspects of the invention.
- Fig. 2 are graphs of current frequency components contributed by the linear driver and switching regulator in the dynamic power supply of Fig. 1.
- Fig. 3A is a diagram illustrating the deployment of a dynamic power supply according to the invention in conjunction with an EER (envelope elimination and restoration) an RF transmitter system.
- Fig. 3B is a diagram illustrating the deployment of a dynamic power supply according to the invention in a highly power-efficient, high-frequency power amplifier circuit.
- Fig. 4 is a diagram of a dynamic power supply similar to that of Fig. 1 and illustrating several additional aspects of the invention.
- Figs. 5A-B are voltage plots illustrating the additional advantageous aspects of the invention based on the power supply of Fig. 4.
- Fig. 6 is a diagram of another embodiment of a dynamic power supply in according with the invention.
- Fig. 7 is a diagram of still another embodiment of a dynamic power supply according to the invention designed to operate in the voltage mode.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The figures and the following description relate to preferred embodiments of the present invention by way of illustration only. It should be noted that from the following discussion,

alternative embodiments of the structures and methods disclosed herein will be readily recognized as viable alternatives that may be employed without departing from the principles of the claimed invention.

Reference will now be made in detail to several embodiments of the present invention(s), examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying figures. It is noted that wherever practicable similar or like reference numbers may be used in the figures and may indicate similar or like functionality. The figures depict embodiments of the present invention for purposes of illustration only. One skilled in the art will readily recognize from the following description that alternative embodiments of the structures and methods illustrated herein may be employed without departing from the principles of the invention described herein.

The present invention will be best understood by first reviewing a diagram of a dynamic power supply **100** in accordance with the invention, as shown in **Fig. 1**. Power supply **100** has a linear driver **102**, also referred to as a linear regulator. Linear driver **102** has a non-inverting input, referred to herein as a first driver input **104**, and an inverting input, referred to herein as a second driver input **106**. Linear driver **102** further has a driver output **108** that provides a driver output current i_{LD} proportional to a voltage difference between its inverting and non-inverting inputs **106**, **104**.

Typically, linear driver **102** is a push-pull type linear driver, providing an output capable of both sourcing and sinking current. Of course, other types of linear drivers may be deployed as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. First driver input **104** is connected to receive a control signal **110**. Control signal **110** controls the overall desired output voltage of dynamic power supply **100** as described below. Furthermore, control signal **110** is a dynamic signal, meaning that it is variable and covers a wide bandwidth. For example, control signal **110** may contain varying frequency components ranging from DC to 20 MHz.

A first input voltage source **112** is connected to a supply rail **114** of linear driver **102**. Voltage source **112** provides a driver supply voltage V_{SLD} . Thus, the power delivered to driver output **108** is derived from voltage source **112**.

Dynamic power supply **100** is further equipped with a switching regulator **120**. Switching regulator **120** is a DC-DC regulator, also referred to as a switched-mode power supply (SMPS), DC-DC converter or simply switcher. In the present embodiment, switching regulator **120** is a step-down buck regulator. Of course, other switching regulator topologies

can be deployed, including step-up, inverting, and various transformer-based topologies. Also, switchers with various control techniques including pulse-width modulated (PWM), hysteretic, and sigma-delta modulation can be deployed, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art.

Switching regulator **120** has a control input **122** and a regulator output **124**. In the present embodiment, control input **122** consists of a non-inverting input **122A** and an inverting input **122B**. Regulator output **124** provides a regulator output current i_{SR} at output **124** based on control input **122**. More precisely, regulator output current i_{SR} is positive when non-inverting input **122A** is at a higher voltage than inverting input **122B**. On the other hand, regulator output current i_{SR} is negative when inverting input **122B** is at a higher voltage than non-inverting input **122A**.

Regulator **120** has an input power source shown here as second input voltage source **126** supplying a switching regulator supply voltage V_{SSR} . Voltage source **126** provides power to a supply rail **128** of switching regulator **120**. The power delivered to regulator output **124** is thus derived from source **126**.

Driver output **108** and regulator output **124** are joined or combined. Specifically, a combiner **136** is used to connect driver and regulator outputs **108**, **124** with each other. Combiner **136** is preferably a wired summing node in the present embodiment. A power output **138** of dynamic power supply **100** is located after combiner **136** to receive the combined signal from driver and regulator outputs **108**, **124** as provided by combiner **136**.

Second driver input **106** of linear driver **102** is connected to power output **138** of dynamic power supply **100** via a node **140**. Node **140** is a wired connection located after combiner **136** that closes a negative feedback loop **142** of driver **102** around power output **138**. In particular, negative feedback loop **142** is established between driver output **108**, via power output **138** to second driver input **106**, which is the inverting input of driver **102**.

Driver output **108** is configured to respond to input signal **110** delivered to its first driver input **104** and to negative feedback from power output **138** applied to its second driver input **106**. In fact, by design, linear driver **102** attempts to keep the voltage difference between its first and second driver inputs **104**, **106** at zero. It does so by adjusting driver output current i_{LD} that it generates at driver output **108**. As a result, driver output **108** strives to follow input signal **110** applied at its non-inverting first input **104**.

In accordance with the invention, dynamic power supply **100** has a capacitor **118** connected in series with driver output **108**. Thus connected, capacitor **118** responds to driver output current i_{LD} by generating a capacitor voltage V_C across its plates. Capacitor voltage V_C as a function of time, $V_C(t)$, is related to driver output current i_{LD} by the equation:

$$V_C(t) = -\frac{1}{C} \int i_{LD}(t) dt. \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

Therefore, voltage $V_C(t)$ across capacitor **118** corresponds to the integral of all the current components that make up driver output current i_{LD} .

The current components of driver output current i_{LD} include DC and low frequency current components. Capacitor voltage $V_C(t)$ is responsive to DC and low frequency current components since capacitive impedance Z_c ($Z_c = 1/\omega C$, where ω is angular frequency) is highest at DC (infinite at $\omega = 0$) and decreases as the frequency increases. Note from Eq. 1 that a positive DC component of current i_{LD} decreases capacitor voltage V_C .

Control input **122** of switching regulator **120** is connected to capacitor **118** to receive capacitor voltage V_C generated across it. Specifically, non-inverting input **122A** and inverting input **122B** are connected across capacitor **118** such that capacitor voltage V_C is applied between inputs **122A**, **122B**. Control input **122** of switching regulator **120** is therefore controlled by capacitor voltage V_C , which then determines regulator output current i_{SR} at regulator output **124**. Note that the polarity of capacitor voltage V_C will determine whether regulator output current i_{SR} is positive or negative based on the operating principles of switching regulator **120** explained above.

Switching regulator **120** is connected in a negative regulator feedback loop **144**. Feedback loop **144** is established between regulator output **124**, combiner **136** and control input **122** of switching regulator **120**. Notice that capacitor **118** is included in feedback loop **144**.

In a manner similar to that of driver **102** in feedback loop **142**, regulator **120** in feedback loop **144** strives to keep the voltage difference between its two inputs **122A**, **122B** at zero. It does so by adjusting regulator output current i_{SR} . If the voltage across inputs **122A**, **122B** is positive (non-inverting input **122A** at higher voltage than inverting input **122B**), then it commands a positive output current i_{SR} . Conversely, when the voltage across inputs **122A**,

122B is negative (non-inverting input **122A** at a lower voltage than inverting input **122B**), regulator **120** commands a negative output current i_{SR} .

In this way, regulator **120** produces the proper output current i_{SR} to produce a voltage across a load **152** to ensure that negative feedback loop **142** of driver **102** prevents driver **102** from sourcing DC and low frequency currents through capacitor **118**, which would otherwise generate a nonzero capacitor voltage V_C .

Before discussing the operation of dynamic power supply **100**, it should be noted that in the preferred embodiment, control input **122** further receives a voltage offset V_{OS} . Voltage offset V_{OS} is placed in series with inverting input **122B** and is produced by an offset voltage source **148** that is typically constant, i.e., DC. The application of voltage offset V_{OS} at input **122B** generates a desirable DC offset at regulator output **124**.

In this case, regulator **120**, striving to keep the voltage difference between its two inputs **122A**, **122B** at zero, causes capacitor **118** to charge to a DC voltage equal to V_{OS} . Also, regulator **120** produces the proper output current i_{SR} to produce a voltage across load **152** to ensure that negative feedback loop **142** of driver **102** prevents driver **102** from sourcing DC and low frequency current components through capacitor **118**, which would otherwise generate a capacitor voltage V_C that deviates from the regulated DC voltage equal to V_{OS} .

In addition, the preferred embodiment also has a regulator **150** for stepping down driver supply voltage V_{SLD} as a function of voltage offset V_{OS} . Regulator **150** is typically a DC-DC regulator that is connected to first input voltage source **112** that supplies driver input voltage V_{SLD} through supply rail **114**. The output voltage of regulator **150** is related to the voltage of offset voltage source **148**, in that regulator **150** provides an output voltage that is reduced when voltage offset V_{OS} of offset voltage source **148** is increased.

Dynamic power supply **100** shown in **Fig. 1** delivers current to load **152**. Load **152** represents any type of useful load, including a low-power circuit belonging to a mobile user electronic device. Such low-power circuits may benefit from a dynamic supply of power to maximize their power efficiency, presuming a varying supply voltage reduces overall power drain.

During operation, linear driver **102** of dynamic power supply **100** receives control signal **110** through first driver input **104**. Since driver **102** is operating in negative feedback loop **142**, driver output current i_{LD} is commanded to follow control signal **110**. That is because doing so satisfies the fundamental property of linear driver **102**, namely that it strive to keep the voltage

difference between its first and second inputs **104**, **106** (non-inverting and inverting, respectively) at zero by adjusting i_{LD} .

Driver output current i_{LD} contains a number of frequency components ranging from DC and low frequency components to high frequency components that may extend up to 20 MHz. As noted above, these DC and low frequency components generate capacitor voltage $V_C(t)$ across capacitor **118** that corresponds to their integrals. Meanwhile, high frequency current components of i_{LD} , e.g., those above about 100 kHz, do not contribute appreciably to capacitor voltage $V_C(t)$. It should be noted that these higher frequency components are outside the bandwidth of switching regulator **120**.

To achieve the desirable results according to the invention, the capacitance C of capacitor **118** should be chosen to ensure low impedance Z_C outside the bandwidth of switching regulator **120**, while still providing a substantial reservoir for DC and low frequency current components in i_{SR} commanded by switching regulator **120**. Suitable capacitance may be chosen on the order of a few μ F. Of course, a person skilled in the art will recognize that the actual value of capacitance C needs to be adjusted for each particular design of dynamic power supply **100**.

Switching regulator **120** receives capacitor voltage $V_C(t)$ at its control input **122**. Regulator **120** is in negative feedback loop **144** and strives to command regulator output current i_{SR} to minimize capacitor voltage $V_C(t)$ to thus keep the voltage difference across its inputs **122A**, **122B** at zero. To accomplish this, switching regulator **120** generates at its regulator output **124** a regulator output current i_{SR} that forces the DC current component of capacitor **118** to be zero. Thus, switching regulator **120** is able to take over the generation of DC and low frequency current components from linear driver **102**.

Note that DC and low frequency current components are precisely those that linear driver **102** is not efficient at handling. In fact, supplying the DC component through driver **102** is highly inefficient, since driver **102** has a linear output stage, and therefore consumes large amounts of power from first input voltage source **112**. In dynamic power supply **100** of the invention, however, switching regulator **120**, which is very efficient at providing the DC component, takes over generation of DC and low frequency current components in its regulator output current i_{SR} .

Combiner **136** sums all current components in i_{LD} and i_{SR} . It thus generates the power output.

Of course, integrating capacitor **118** in feedback loop **144** provides for very high gain at DC, with a 20 dB/decade frequency decline in output at higher frequencies. This means that switching regulator **120** will always have a high contribution at DC with a rapidly declining contribution at higher frequencies, where linear driver **102** takes over.

Fig. 2 illustrates the partitioning of current component contributions between linear driver **102** and switching regulator **120** over an entire operating range of dynamic power supply **100**. Graph **160** illustrates the frequency components contributed to output current i_{OUT} by switching regulator **120**. Note that the DC component is provided entirely by switching regulator **120**. Then, after an appropriate roll-off, graph **160** shows the contribution of regulator **120** dropping to zero by 200 kHz. That is the bandwidth of regulator **120**. Meanwhile, graph **162** illustrates the frequency components contributed to output current i_{OUT} by linear driver **102**. The situation is the opposite, with no contribution at DC and contribution of all high frequency components above 200 kHz up to its bandwidth (e.g., up to 20 MHz).

Referring back to **Fig. 1**, regulator output current i_{SR} is shown broken down into two parts. A first part **154** is made up of the DC and low frequency current components whose generation switching regulator **120** takes over from linear driver **102** as explained above. A second part **156** is a ripple due to the switching operation of regulator **120**. More precisely, ripple **156** is a high frequency triangle current (usually about 1 MHz) and its higher harmonics, generated by internal magnetics of regulator **120**. Persons skilled in the art will be familiar with this feature of switching regulators.

Meanwhile, a second part **154'** of the useful output current is contained in driver output current i_{LD} . In particular, second part **154'** contains the higher frequency current components that regulator **120** does not provide in regulator output current i_{SR} .

From the point of view of dynamic power supply **100**, ripple **156** represents noise. The portion of noise **156** contained in the operating bandwidth of dynamic power supply **100** is called in-band noise. In-band noise **156** is carried along with the useful part **154** representing the DC and low frequency components of regulator output current i_{SR} to combiner **136**.

Combiner **136** sums driver output current i_{LD} from driver output **108** and regulator output current i_{SR} from regulator output **124** to yield output current i_{OUT} . In the process of driving

load **152**, an output voltage signal **158** at V_{OUT} that corresponds to output current i_{OUT} is registered at power output **138**.

It is output voltage V_{OUT} that is applied back to second driver input **106** of linear driver **102** in its negative feedback loop **142**. As explained above, in striving to keep the voltage difference between inputs **104**, **106** at zero, linear driver **102** is driven to ensure faithful reproduction of control signal **110** at its output **108**.

At this point, another advantageous aspect of dynamic power supply **100** becomes clear. Namely, an inverse of noise or ripple **156**, designated by reference **156'** that is outside the bandwidth of switching regulator **120** is produced by linear driver **102**. When summed by combiner **136**, ripple **156** cancels with its inverse **156'**. This is because undesirable noise **156** is produced within the control bandwidth of linear driver **102**. Thus, the ripple voltage generated across load **152** from ripple current **156** originating from switching regulator **120** is cancelled in loop **142**. Differently put, feedback loop **142** will act to eliminate or “clean up” in-band portion of noise **156** produced by switching regulator **120**, since noise **156** is not contained in control signal **110** that linear driver **102** is striving to follow at its driver output **108**.

Obviously, elimination of in-band noise or ripple **156** by linear driver **102** is a very desirable result. It ensures a cleaner output voltage **158** or V_{OUT} at power output **138** that drives load **152**. It should be noted, however, that in-band noise **156** or ripple outside the bandwidth of linear driver **102**, which usually extends up to about 10-20 MHz, will not be cleaned in this manner.

Dynamic power supply **100** as shown in **Fig. 1** and analogous power supplies according to the invention can be used in many situations. For example, **Fig. 3A** illustrates how dynamic power supply **100** is deployed in an RF transmission system or radio system **170**.

System **170** has an RF power amplifier **172** (RF PA) and employs the EER (Envelope Elimination and Restoration) technique, also known as the Kahn technique. In the case of system **170**, the goal is to use dynamic power supply **100** to improve the efficiency of RF PA **172**. For example, system **170** is a radio system such as a cellular transmitter that may reside in a smart phone or other mobile communications device.

System **170** provides an envelope signal **174** that is to be modulated onto a carrier signal **176** to produce an output signal **178**. Output signal **178** is to be transmitted from an antenna (not

shown). Any suitable modulation and encoding scheme that includes an amplitude modulated component known in the art and suitable for use with EER can be used in producing output signal **178** (e.g., quadrature modulation, QAM).

Envelope signal **174** is separated from carrier signal **176** in accordance with EER. Carrier signal **176** is typically in a high frequency band, e.g., 2 GHz. Meanwhile, envelope signal **174** may have a bandwidth of about 10 MHz.

Envelope signal **174** is sent to dynamic power supply **100** to serve as control signal **110** (see **Fig. 1**). Supply **100** operates as previously described to output a modulated voltage signal **182**, which corresponds to modulated source voltage V_{SOURCE} from source **180**. More precisely, signal **182** is modulated in accordance with envelope signal **174**.

Modulated voltage signal **182** is provided to RF PA **172** as its supply voltage V_S via its voltage supply rail **184**. Thus, envelope signal **174** dictates the amplitude of supply voltage V_S of RF PA **172** in sync with the amplitude of output signal **178** to be produced by RF PA **172**. It is noted that any necessary syncing provisions, such as a phase delay **186** and other measures (not shown) are well known in the art.

Under the above conditions, RF PA **172** operates in saturation mode, with high efficiency. Also note, that RF PA **172** in such embodiments may be a “class C” power amplifier.

Fig. 3B is a diagram illustrating the deployment of dynamic power supply **100** as illustrated in **Fig. 1** or an analogous supply in a power-efficient, high-frequency circuit **190**. Circuit **190** has a power amplifier **192** that may operate in the RF frequency range. Amplifier **192** is provided to amplify a signal **194** provided from a signal source **193** and required by circuit **190**. Signal **194** varies within an envelope **196** that is indicated with a dashed line.

Once again, a signal **198** that varies as envelope **196** is used as control signal of dynamic power supply **100**. Signal **198** is provided by a supply control **197**. Necessary provisions are made to ensure that signal **198** is synchronized with signal **194**. Also, a source voltage V_{SOURCE} is provided from a voltage supply **200** of circuit **190**. Voltage supply **200** is typically a battery.

In operation, dynamic power supply **100** modulates source voltage V_{SOURCE} in accordance with signal **198**. Modulated source voltage V_{SOURCE} is used as supply voltage V_S of amplifier

192, which amplifies signal **194**. Supply voltage V_S is thus modulated in sync with signal **198**, which tracks envelope **196** of signal **194**.

Amplifier **192** is preferably operated with sufficient overhead in supply voltage V_S to be efficient. In fact, signal **198** provided by supply control **197** does not need to even be envelope **196** of signal **194** to be amplified. Signal **198** may be a square-wave approximation of envelope **196**, as indicated by reference **198'**. Of course, many alternative waveforms can be used as signal **198** to control the amplification of signal **194**, as will be understood by those skilled in the art.

The amplification of signal **194** with changing amplitude in circuit **190** occurs very efficiently. This reduces the overall power consumption of circuit **190** and extends the life of battery **200**.

Fig. 4 is a diagram of a dynamic power supply **202** that is very similar to dynamic power supply **100** of **Fig. 1**. The same reference numbers are used to designate corresponding parts whose operation has already been described above. Power supply **202** illustrates the additional benefits of capacitor **118**. Note that voltage across capacitor **118**, namely capacitor voltage V_C , is expressly indicated in **Fig. 4**.

In addition to parts already described in power supply **100**, power supply **202** also has an optional low-pass filter **204** connected in series with regulator output **124**. Filter **204** may be an inductor. It should be noted, however, that the use of an inductor as filter **204** may cause undesirable ringing and other undesirable side-effects. Therefore, additional measures may need to be deployed when an inductor is used as filter **204**.

Power supply **202** is labeled with several points, namely points **A** through **F**, where the output voltage waveform is shown to better explain additional advantageous aspects of power supply **202**. Graphs of voltage plots A and B, as shown in corresponding **Figs. 5A-B** will now be used to clarify.

Fig. 5A shows Plot A in which voltage offset V_{OS} applied by voltage offset source **148** is zero, i.e., $V_{OS}=0$. No offset or boost voltage is applied in this case. The upper part of Plot A shows output voltages from linear driver **102** (point **A**) and from switching regulator **120** (point **C**). The first voltage input source **112** supplying linear driver **102** (see **Fig. 1**), denoted as point **D**, must remain higher than the peak voltages output by linear driver **102**, in order to provide

sufficient operating headroom. As well, second voltage input source **126** supplying switching regulator **120**, denoted as point **F**, must remain higher than the output from switching regulator **120**. Note that in the preferred embodiment, switching regulator **120** is a step-down only regulator, which is the most efficient type (in contrast to step-up, or step-up/step-down types).

The bottom part of Plot A shows the resulting voltage waveform at point **E**. This is the output of dynamic power supply **202** at power output **138**. Now compare these to the Plot B.

Fig. 5B shows Plot B, which illustrates what happens when a non-zero voltage offset V_{OS} is applied by voltage offset source **148** to capacitor **118**. In this case, switching regulator **120** maintains a fixed capacitor voltage V_C as measured across capacitor **118**. Thus, output of linear driver **102** at point **A** operates at a lower voltage than at point **B**. The top part of Plot B shows this, with point **A** now operating at much lower voltage levels.

The application of voltage offset V_{OS} at control input **122** of switching regulator **120** thus generates a desirable DC offset at regulator output **124**. The benefit is that driver supply voltage V_{SLD} supplied from first input voltage source **112** to linear driver **102** via rail **114** can be stepped down (see **Fig. 1**). That is clear from Plot B, where linear driver **102** operates at a lower peak voltage level and no longer requires V_{SLD} to be so high. Point **D** denotes V_{SLD} , shown here in PLOT B to be reduced compared with point **D** from Plot A. V_{SLD} can be reduced because the output of linear driver **102** (denoted as point **A**) operates at a lower voltage in PLOT B than it did in PLOT A, and thus input voltage source **112** may be reduced while still providing sufficient operating headroom required for the driver to pass the signal.

The reducing or stepping down of V_{SLD} is performed by a suitable step-down regulator. In supply **100** of **Fig. 1** and in supply **202** of **Fig. 4** the same regulator **150** (see **Fig. 1**) is used for this purpose. Preferably regulator **150** is a step-down switching regulator or DC-DC regulator that performs this step-down efficiently without wasting power. Therefore, the overall power supply efficiency is increased, since the efficiency of linear driver **102** is increased by operating at lowered V_{SLD} .

Looking at the bottom part of Plot B, another benefit is revealed. The peak signal voltage level at point **E**, i.e., at power output **138** can actually rise above supply voltages V_{SLD} and V_{SSR} , supported by the boosting effect of offset voltage V_{OS} at capacitor **118**. The peaks above supply voltage V_{SSR} can be achieved without a boost regulator, simplifying the system

and further increasing efficiency. Thus, the preferred method of invention extends to applying voltage offset V_{OS} at power output **124** via switching regulator's **120** supply voltage V_{SSR} , because this permits operation in a mode where the peak voltage provided by linear driver **102** is exceeded. Again, these advantages are especially desirable in mobile units where supply voltages V_{SLD} and V_{SSR} are provided by batteries.

In any of the above embodiments, first and second voltage sources **112**, **126** can, in fact, be derived from same voltage source. This common source will usually be a battery. In particular, this is likely so in mobile devices that may have a single battery to power all of their circuits. Nevertheless, the ability to efficiently step down voltages required from such common battery, for example driver supply voltage V_{SDL} that is lower than a regulator supply voltage V_{SSR} in the preferred embodiment, represents a power savings. In devices that do not have a single common source, of course, the sources providing V_{SDL} and V_{SSR} may be entirely separate and distinct.

Alternatively, the voltage supply sources **112**, **126** originate from different sources. This may occur in circuits and devices that are not restricted to a single battery. Indeed, these devices can have a distinct second input voltage source. The latter can be connected to switching regulator **120** for supplying it with a switching regulator supply voltage V_{SSR} higher than driver supply voltage V_{SLD} .

Fig. 6 is a diagram of another embodiment of a dynamic power supply **300** in accordance with the invention. Power supply **300** illustrates a more specific implementation of several advantageous aspects of the invention. The same reference numerals as in prior drawing figures are used to designate corresponding parts.

As before, power supply **300** deploys linear driver **102** with capacitor **118** connected in series with driver output **108**. Supply rail **114** of driver **102** receives its supply voltage V_{SDL} from a corresponding source, e.g., a battery (not shown).

A negative feedback loop **302** that delivers negative feedback to second driver input **106**, as before. Also, in this embodiment, a digital-to-analog converter (DAC) **308** sets a precise offset voltage V_{OS} , controlled by digital offset control input **306**. Note that in a practical system, setting offset voltage V_{OS} requires some knowledge of the expected peak levels expected at the output. This is related to the power level and modulation type, which is commonly known in a radio transmitter system, e.g., as shown in **Fig. 3A**.

Power supply **300** has a specific type of switching regulator **310** whose parts are shown in detail within the dashed box. Regulator **310** is a hysteretic-type switching regulator that provides regulator output current i_{SR} . Regulator **310** utilizes complementary switches **312**, **314** to switch a switching inductor **316** between switching regulator supply voltage V_{SSR} and ground **GND** in a step-down topology. Complementary switches **312**, **314** are embodied by P-MOSFET and N-MOSFET transistors, respectively. A make-before-break circuit **318**, known to those skilled in the art, ensures each switch is only activated after the previously active one is deactivated.

A current sense amplifier **320** provides a signal indicating current i_{SR} in inductor **316** by measuring the voltage across a current sense resistor **322**. Amplifier **320** is connected to an inverting input of a hysteretic comparator **324** to supply it with the signal indicating current i_{SR} .

Regulator **310** has at its control input **312** an error amplifier **326**. In fact, the inputs of error amplifier **326** correspond to inputs **122A**, **122B** (see **Fig. 1**). As a result, error amplifier **326** receives an input signal corresponding to capacitor voltage V_C . The output of error amplifier **326** is supplied to the non-inverting input of hysteretic comparator **324**. Thus connected to both error amplifier **326** and current sense amplifier **320**, hysteretic comparator **324** controls make-before-break circuit **318** that actuates complementary switches **312**, **314**.

Summing node **328** is provided to sum currents i_{LD} and i_{SR} from linear driver **102** and switching regulator **310**. As in the prior embodiment, summing node **328** is a wired summing node. A power output **330** is provided for connecting a load to the combined output signal.

A filter **332** may optionally be placed at the output of switching regulator **310**. As remarked above, filter **332** could be embodied by an inductor if appropriate measures are taken to eliminate ringing and other deleterious side-effects. For an appropriate use of an inductor as filter **332** reference is made to co-pending U.S. Patent Application entitled "Low-Noise, High Bandwidth Quasi-Resonant Mode Switching Power Supply" filed on the same date as the present application.

The operation of power supply **300** is analogous to the operation of previously described embodiments. In other words, supply **300** operates in a "current mode" where i_{LD} and i_{SR} are summed at node **328** during operation and provided to drive a load (e.g., see **Fig. 1**).

Fig. 7 is a diagram of still another embodiment of a dynamic power supply **400** according to the invention designed to operate in a “voltage mode” rather than “current mode”. In this case, the important output signals of linear driver **102** and switching regulator **310** are voltages, not currents. Thus, rather than detecting the DC and low frequency current components of a current signal, in the voltage mode dynamic power supply **400** uses a node **402** at driver output **108** for detecting the DC and low frequency voltage components in driver output voltage. For this reason, node **402** is connected to input **122B** of switching regulator **310**.

Power supply **400** deploys a digital-to-analog converter (DAC) **404** to set a precise offset voltage V_{OS} . Voltage V_{OS} is applied to input **122B** of switching regulator **310**. Thus, regulator **310** attempts via its output to boost the voltage at an output capacitor **406**. It does so in order to servo the average voltage output of linear driver **102** to the V_{OS} .

Power supply **400** deploys a summing transformer **408** for adding the voltages from driver **102** and switching regulator **310**. A power output **410** is provided after a node **412** that closes the feedback loop of driver **102** after transformer **408**.

During operation, switching regulator **310** regulates its regulator output to minimize the difference between the DC and low frequency components present at driver output **108** and externally-supplied offset voltage V_{OS} from DAC **404** utilizing its regulator feedback loop. To accomplish this, switching regulator **310** generates at its regulator output a regulator output voltage that satisfies the driver’s feedback loop and thus force the driver’s DC output voltage to equal the offset voltage V_{OS} . Capacitor **118** isolates the DC level of driver output **108**, ensuring that the DC component is advantageously provided entirely by switching regulator **310**, in a manner similar to that described in the “current mode” schemes of **Figs. 1, 4 and 6**.

Summing transformer **408** combines the driver output voltage and the regulator output voltage at power output **410** in the present and other voltage mode embodiments. A capacitor **414** may be provided as a reservoir capacitor for regulator **310**, to reduce the voltage ripple produced by the switching currents from inductor **316**. In the case where capacitor **414** is not included in the circuit, inductor **316** may also be removed, and the primary winding of transformer **408** may also serve the function of switching inductor **316**.

A regulator for stepping down the driver supply voltage V_{SLD} from the first input voltage source based on the DC offset can also be deployed in these embodiments. Thus,

advantageously, linear driver **102** may be powered from a lower supply voltage V_{SLD} related to the setting of offset voltage V_{OS} , in a manner similar to that described in the “current mode” scheme.

In view of the above teaching, a person skilled in the art will recognize that the apparatus and method of invention can be embodied in many different ways in addition to those described without departing from the spirit of the invention. Therefore, the scope of the invention should be judged in view of the appended claims and their legal equivalents.

I claim:

1. A dynamic power supply for regulating a power output by a control signal, said dynamic power supply comprising:
 - a) a linear driver having:
 - 1) a first driver input for receiving said control signal having a predetermined bandwidth;
 - 2) a driver output for generating a driver output current;
 - 3) a second driver input connected to said power output for receiving a negative feedback;
 - b) a capacitor connected in series with said driver output for generating a capacitor voltage responsive to DC and low frequency current components in said driver output current;
 - c) a switching regulator having a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop, wherein said control input is connected to receive said capacitor voltage and said regulator feedback loop minimizes said capacitor voltage thereby generating at said regulator output a regulator output current comprising said DC and low frequency current components; and
 - d) a combiner for combining said driver output current and said regulator output current to yield said power output.
2. The dynamic power supply of claim 1, wherein said combiner is a wired summing node.
3. The dynamic power supply of claim 1, wherein said switching regulator is a step-down buck regulator and said linear driver is a push-pull type linear driver.
4. The dynamic power supply of claim 1, wherein said control input receiving said capacitor voltage further receives a voltage offset from an offset voltage source, thereby generating a DC offset in said driver output.
5. The dynamic power supply of claim 4, further comprising a regulator for stepping down a driver supply voltage from a first input voltage source based on said DC offset.

6. The dynamic power supply of claim 5, wherein said first input voltage source comprises a battery, said battery being connected to said switching regulator for supplying a switching regulator supply voltage.
7. The dynamic power supply of claim 5, further comprising a second input voltage source being connected to said switching regulator for supplying a switching regulator supply voltage higher than said driver supply voltage.
8. The dynamic power supply of claim 1, wherein said predetermined bandwidth is at least 100 kHz.
9. The dynamic power supply of claim 8, further comprising a low-pass filter connected in series with said switching regulator before said combiner.
10. A method for regulating a power output of a dynamic power supply by a control signal, said method comprising:
 - a) providing a linear driver having a first driver input, a second driver input and a driver output;
 - b) connecting said first driver input to receive said control signal having a predetermined bandwidth and generate a driver output current at said driver output;
 - c) connecting said second driver input to said power output for receiving a negative feedback;
 - d) connecting in series with said driver output a capacitor for generating a capacitor voltage responsive to DC and low frequency current components in said driver output current;
 - e) providing a switching regulator having a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop, wherein said control input receives said capacitor voltage and said regulator feedback loop minimizes said capacitor voltage thereby generating at said regulator output a regulator output current comprising said DC and low frequency current components; and
 - f) combining said driver output current and said regulator output current to yield said power output.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said power output is delivered to a supply voltage rail of an RF power amplifier, and said control signal comprises an RF modulated signal to be modulated onto an RF carrier by said dynamic power supply.
12. The method of claim 10, wherein said power output modulates an RF power amplifier supply voltage in accordance with a signal to be amplified by said RF power amplifier.
13. The method of claim 10, further comprising applying a voltage offset at said power output via said switching regulator, thereby exceeding a peak voltage provided by said linear driver.
14. The method of claim 10, further comprising adding a voltage offset from an offset voltage source to said control input, thereby generating a DC offset in said driver output.
15. The method of claim 14, further comprising stepping down an input voltage source to apply a stepped-down driver supply voltage to said linear driver when said voltage offset is applied.
16. A dynamic power supply for regulating a power output by a control signal, said power supply comprising:
 - a) a linear driver having:
 - 1) a first driver input for receiving said control signal having a predetermined bandwidth;
 - 2) a driver output for generating a driver output voltage;
 - 3) a second driver input connected to said power output for receiving a negative feedback;
 - b) a node at said driver output for sampling DC and low frequency voltage components in said driver output voltage;
 - c) a switching regulator having a control input and a regulator output connected in a regulator feedback loop, wherein said control input is connected to an offset voltage source and to said node for receiving said DC and low frequency voltage components and said regulator feedback loop minimizes said DC and low frequency voltage components thereby generating at said regulator output a

regulator output voltage comprising a DC offset and said DC and low frequency voltage components; and

- d) a summing transformer for combining said driver output voltage and said regulator output voltage to yield said power output.
17. The dynamic power supply of claim 16, further comprising a regulator for stepping down a driver supply voltage from a first input voltage source based on said DC offset.
 18. The dynamic power supply of claim 16, wherein said predetermined bandwidth is at least 100 kHz.

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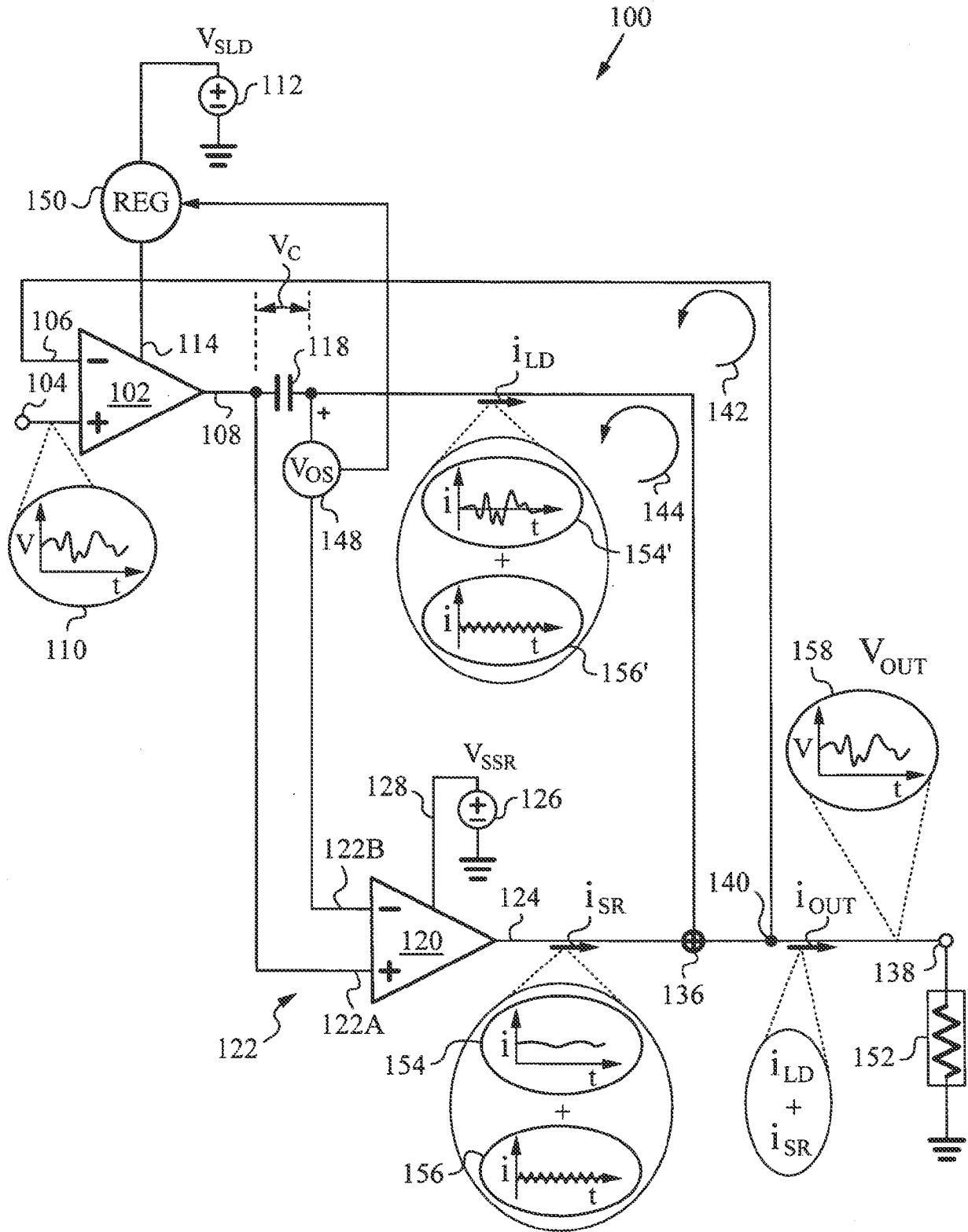


Fig. 1

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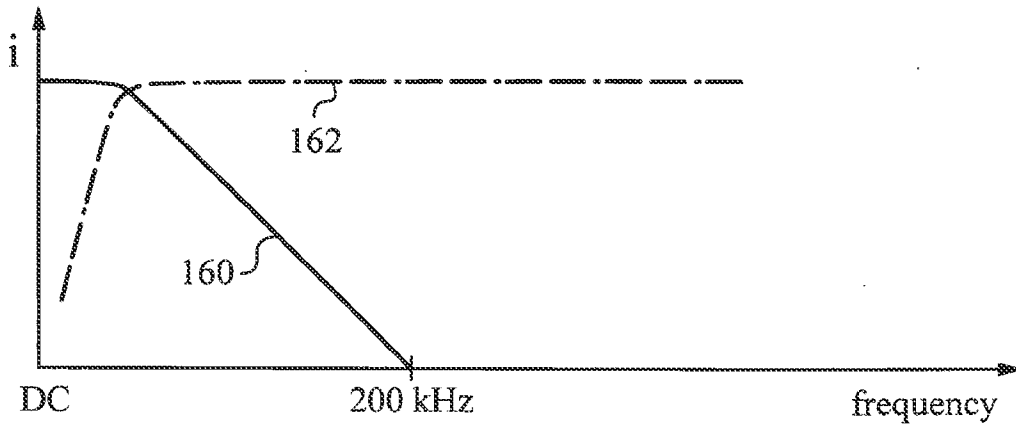


Fig. 2

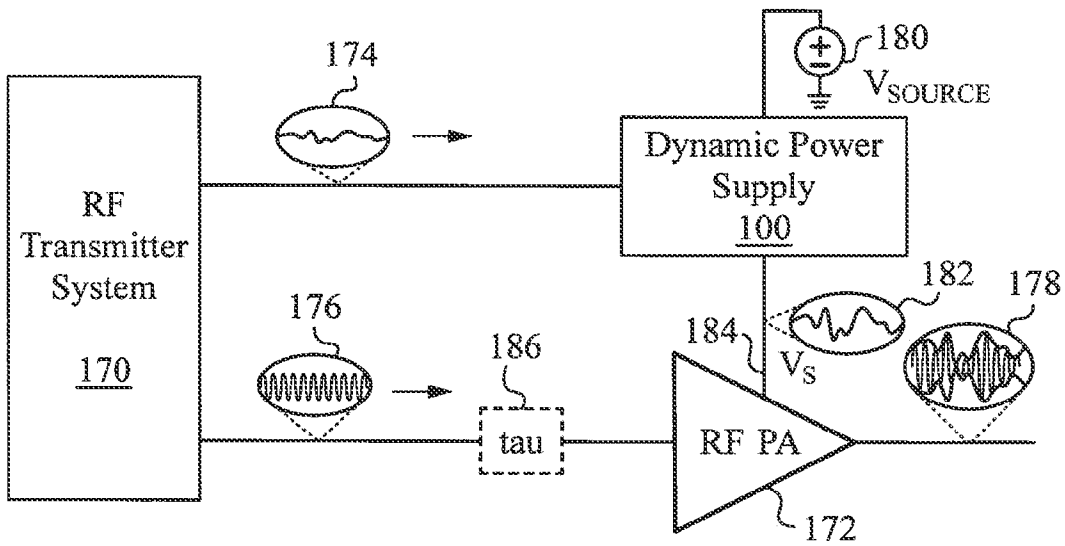


Fig. 3A

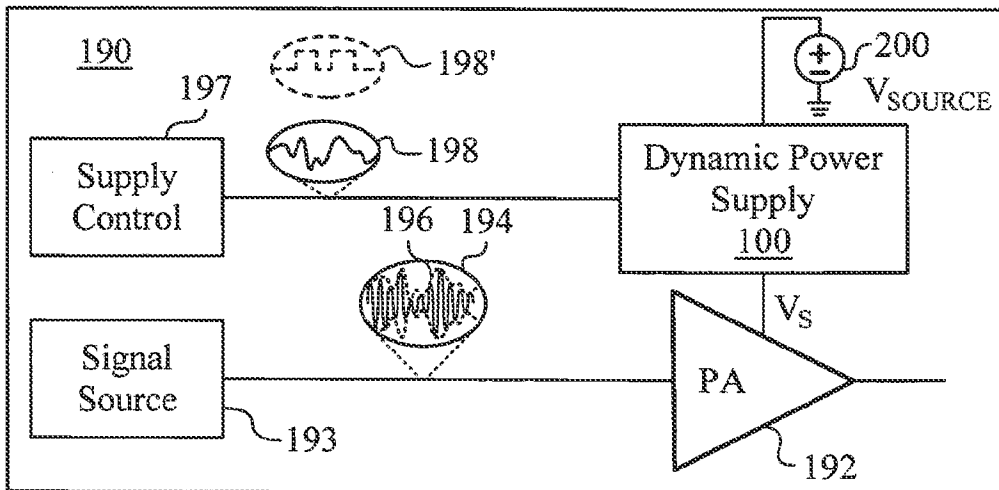


Fig. 3B

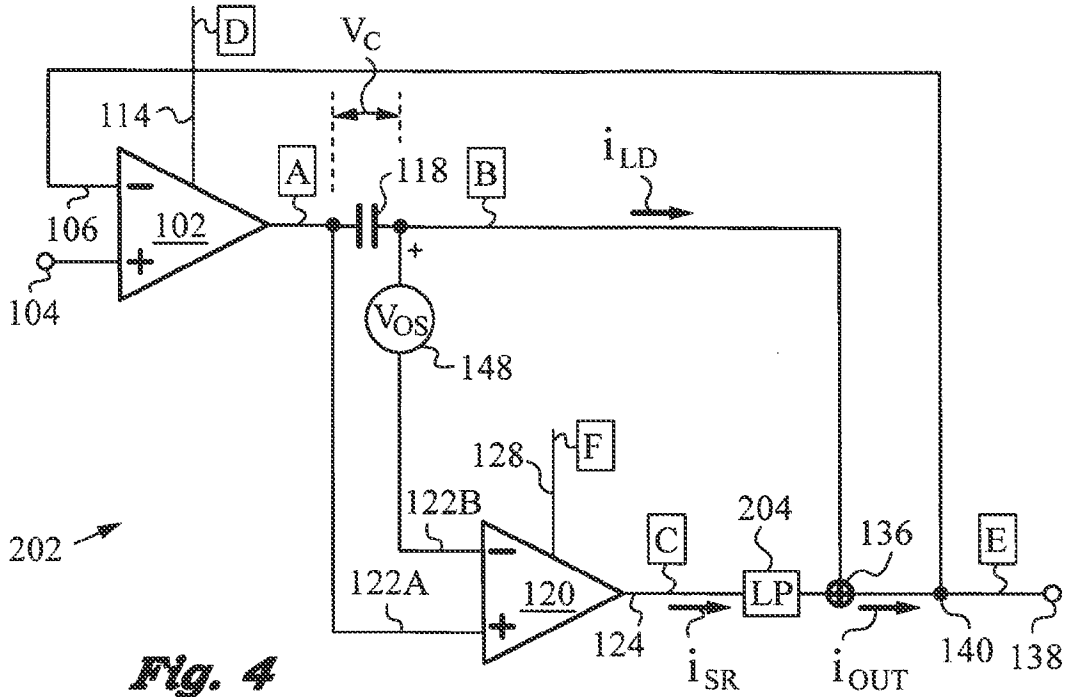


Fig. 4

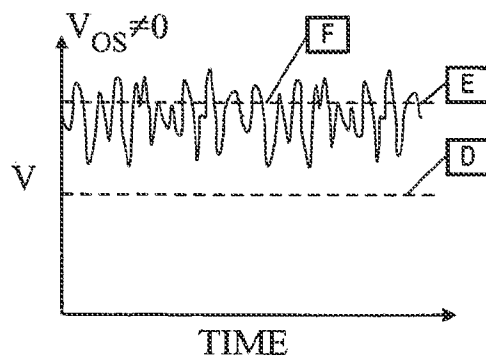
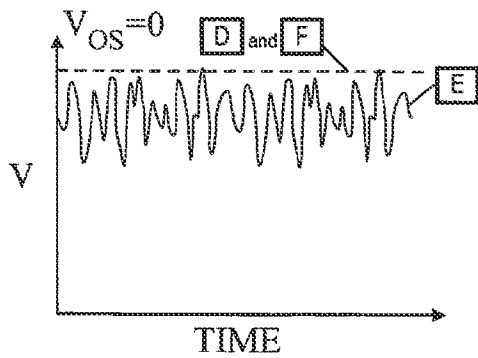
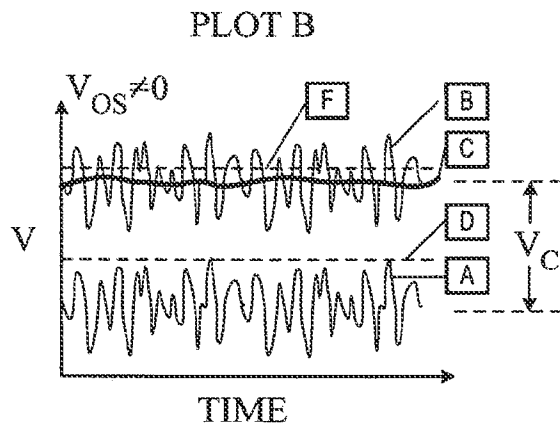
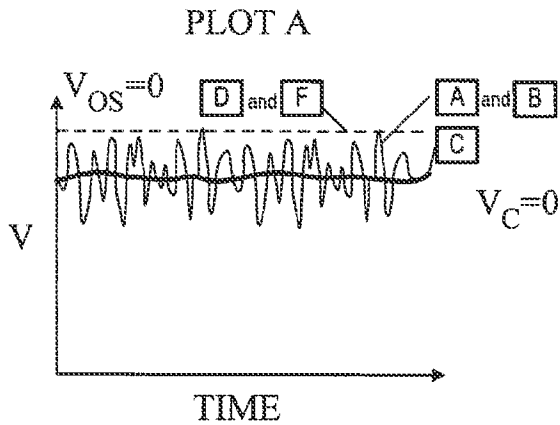


Fig. 5A

Fig. 5B

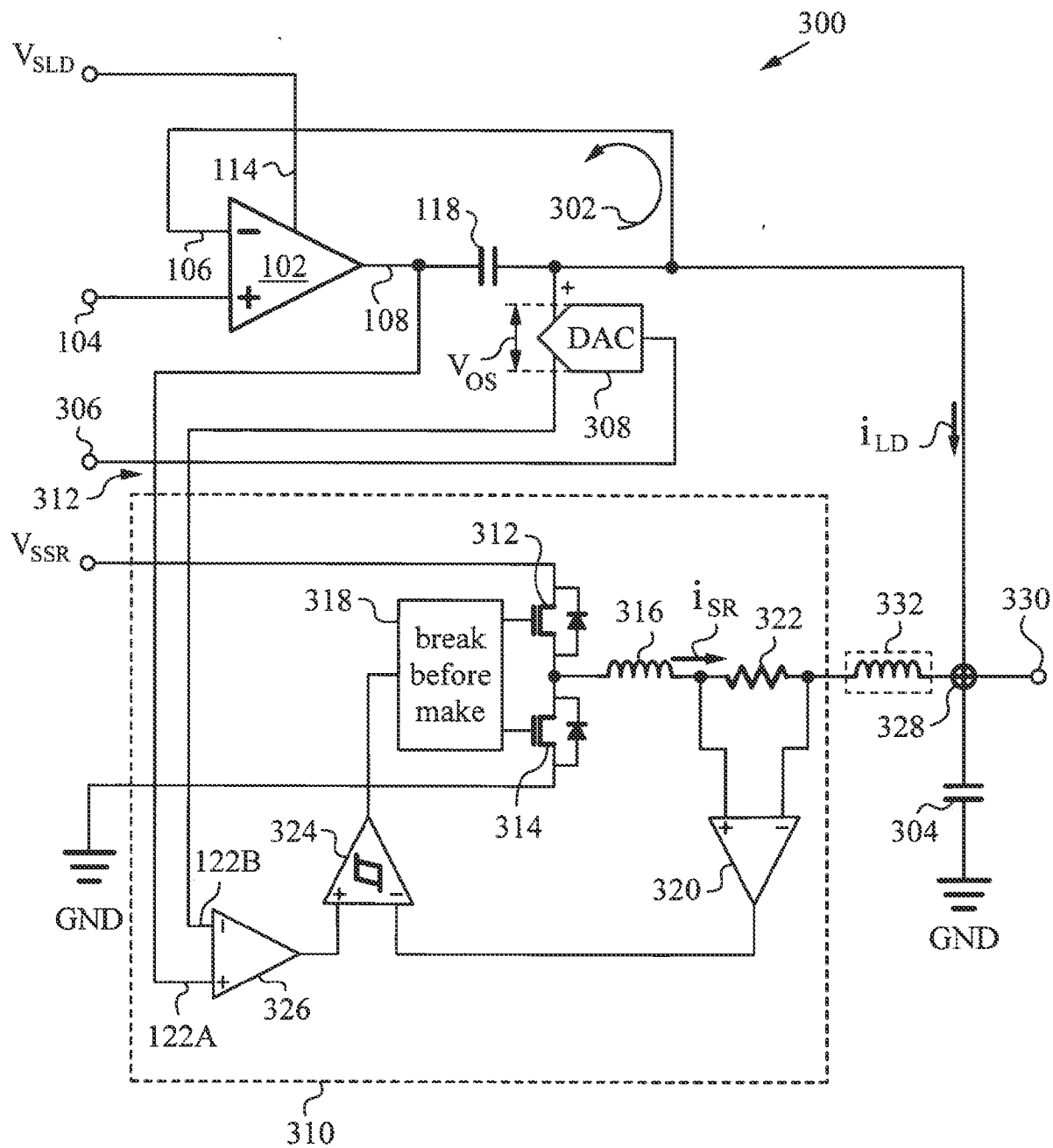


Fig. 6

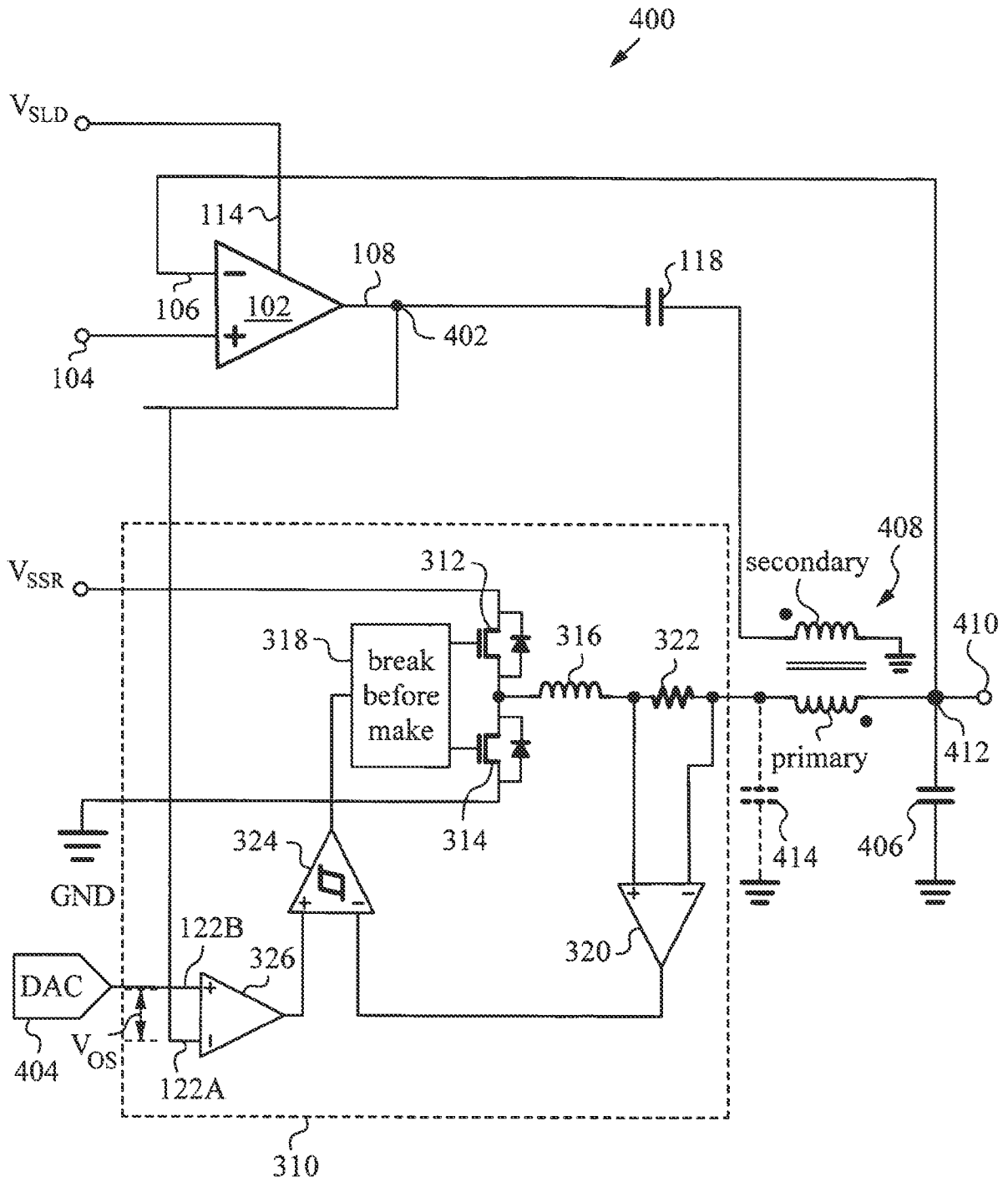


Fig. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US2013/024799

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - G05F 5/08 (2013.01)

USPC - 323/303

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) - G05F 5/00, 5/08; G11B 15/18; G06F 1/26; G01R 19/00 (2013.01)

USPC - 323/226, 269, 270, 273; 700/286

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

CPC - H03K 17/64, 2217/0081; H02J 7/007

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatBase, Google Patents, Google

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 6,984,969 B1 (LIU et al) 10 January 2006 (10.01.2006) entire document	1-18
Y	US 4,686,448 A (JONES et al) 11 August 1987 (11.08.1987) entire document	1-15
Y	US 3,671,846 A (COREY) 20 June 1972 (20.06.1972) entire document	16-18
Y	US 2005/0064830 A1 (GRIGORE) 24 March 2005 (24.03.2005) entire document	3, 5-7, 17
Y	US 7,547,995 B1 (ANDREWS et al) 16 June 2009 (16.06.2009) entire document	3
Y	ECIRCUIT CENTER. BJT Differential Amplifier. 2004 [retrieved on 21 March 2013]. Retrieved from the Internet: <URL: http://www.ecircuitcenter.com/Circuits/BJT_Diffamp1/BJT_Diffamp1.htm >. pages 1-5	13

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

21 March 2013

Date of mailing of the international search report

22 APR 2013

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