

Power System on a Chip (PSoC)

Chika Nwankpa, Anthony Deese, Qingyan Liu, Aaron St. Leger, Jeffrey Yakaski

Center for Electric Power Engineering
ECE Department
Drexel University

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104, USA
Email: chika@nwankpa.ece.drexel.edu

Abstract— This paper addresses modeling issues behind the development of a hardware analog emulator of power system behavior referred to as a Power System on a Chip (PSoC). The paper will review various problems and proposed solutions encountered from the design stage to PC-board hardware implementation to anticipated VLSI implementation. It has already been noted that using analog emulation for power system analysis allows for reduction in computation time, without significant loss in accuracy, compared to numerical methods. This is further validated in this paper through observations obtained from comparative runs between software and analog hardware environments.

I. INTRODUCTION

With current technology power-flow computation of large power systems is time intensive. There are numerous analog and digital computation methods currently utilized but they fail to meet the growing computational demands of power systems, particularly in system operations. More specifically, the expansion of the power grid, increasing necessity and complexity of contingency studies and introduction of economic analyses are demanding tremendous computational burden. Traditional digital methods are too slow to solve the aforementioned demands quickly at a reasonable cost. Cluster computing is popular but the cost increases exponentially with the size of the system and the increase in computation performance does not increase at this same rate. Conversely, existing analog simulators can easily simulate the power system in real time but consist of many analog components and require manual intervention to setup and configure the system for each calculation. Ideally, a real-time computation tool, or faster than real-time, is preferable.

Currently, digital simulation is the prevalent method for several reasons. These include i) the emergence of personal computers (PC) has made this technology reliable and easy to operate, and ii) advances in very large scale integration (VLSI) technology have allowed the development of new parallel computers with performance comparable to that of supercomputers at a fraction of the cost.

Typically in digital simulation the set of algebraic expressions which describe power system behavior are discretized and software algorithms (such as Newton-Raphson) utilize input parameters to calculate the steady-state solution. Presently for large-scale systems, studies are performed with several types of massively parallel computers [1, 2]. The use of digital simulation analysis is seriously inhibited by lengthy computational times inherent to the iterative algorithms they employ.

A new approach has arisen as to how analog technology may be utilized to perform analysis for larger power systems [3]. The main advantage of analog emulators is their shorter computational time. Within this rapidly growing area, several research foci exist.

- new reconfigurable analog tools such as operational transconductance amplifiers (OTA) and accompanying circuits
- component (generator, transmission line, load...) modeling both mathematical and circuit analogy
- control / data acquisition for large systems

The use of analog computational engines was quite widespread before digital technology reached the level of refinement and affordable price it has over the past thirty years. Recently, the idea of analog computation as a practical technology has been reintroduced by Fried et al. [3]. That work described how analog computational technology might be refined through advances in very large scale integration technology (VLSI). This paper will expand upon that work by outlining and reporting progress made on the necessary stages involved incorporating these advances. Because of the incorporation of VLSI technology in this approach we propose the following name for the emulator: Power System on a Chip (PSoC).

Towards this end, PSoC development consists of building a programmable and reconfigurable analog mixed-signal circuit representation of a power network with complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) devices. The actual PSoC comprises of a VLSI chip for simulation or emulation of its behavior. This emulator is initially designed

for a steady-state load flow solver, which could be used for many applications. As will be shown this approach allows further study into circuit behavior with inclusion of power system dynamics. The success of this approach allows for ease of implementation and scaling into a VLSI chip.

The topic of this paper is presented in the following manner. In the next section, the problem formulation will describe the necessary stages involved in this research. Section III presents the methodology behind the modeling, simulation, printed circuit board (PCB) development and implementation of our analog emulator. Results presented in Section IV will include a prototype of the proposed emulator with the goal of extracting system information and controlling various parameters and switches in order to accomplish the essential tasks required in emulating a small power system example. This will be followed by a discussions and conclusion.

II. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The development process involves four stages including feasibility studies, PCB design, VLSI design, and VLSI implementation as seen in Fig. 1.

Stage I focuses on the practicality of analog computation for power system studies avoiding development and construction of analog circuits and hardware. This is demonstrated with Analog Behavior Modeling (ABM) of electric circuits in PSpice, which represents the power system and its behavior. This stage describes the intricacies of circuit connections and allows for model validation without any full structural design and implementation.

Stage II comprises of development and realization of analog circuitry to replace the building blocks assembled in the previous stage. Using CMOS devices and software packages, the design, simulation, and PCB layout of power system components, i.e. generators, loads, transmission lines, etc, can be achieved. This development stage is broken up into two parts entailing a) circuit modeling and simulation and b) PC board development and emulation. Simulations will provides initial benchmarks in a) while in b) we will obtain additional effects of physical conditions, which will be explained in the next section. Advantages of PCB hardware implementation will provide cost reduction with respect to debugging. Since VLSI is expensive for initial studies, CMOS hardware allows insight into problems that can be addressed before VLSI implementation begins.

Stages III and IV move this circuit realization into the final VLSI design and fabrication of a “Power System on a Chip”. Though not covered in this paper, we see similarities with the issues addressed in Stage II. These include modeling realizations of various power system components in addition to control and data acquisition schemes. The standout issue in these stages will be scalability issues involving system size capability and associated ramifications. The goal being to qualify and quantify what size power system can be captured on a given VLSI chip.

The next section details the background and systematic approach of each stage that was just described.

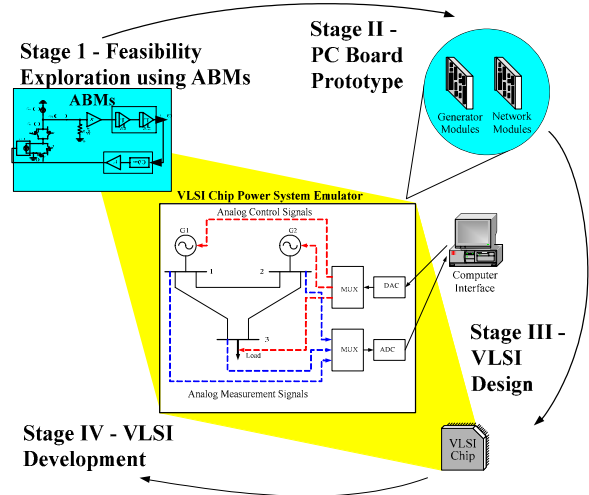


Figure 1. PSoc Development Stages

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Behavioral Modeling and Simulation

Power system component dynamic behavioral models consist of a set of algebraic/differential expressions. Before attempting to implement this relationship in analog hardware the exact form and complexity of these expressions must be defined as it dictates several characteristics of the resultant circuit. These include

- the types and number of analog hardware control inputs and measurement outputs
- which parameters will be reconfigurable
- how the analog hardware will react to variations in the network state
- the size and complexity of the circuit

It is at this point the designer must decide what level of model complexity is appropriate for the intended use.

Once the mathematical component model has been finalized, it can be implemented into a circuit form using ABM components [4]. These ABM components only exist in simulation (within a software package such as PSpice) and provide ideal responses to external stimuli. They are immune to inaccuracies that plague real components such as signal noise, voltage/current offsets, operational errors, and finite operational ranges. The behavior of each ABM component, and the circuit as a whole, will later be approximated using real analog components. An example of a generator swing equation ABM implementation is shown Figure 2. Hence, ABM models of power systems consist of ABM components and actual circuit elements such as resistors and sources interfacing one another seamlessly.

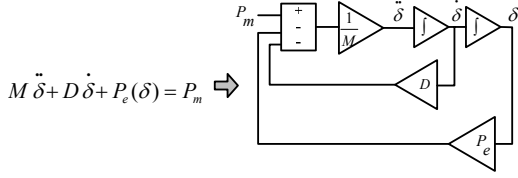


Figure 2. Generator Swing Equation ABM Modeling Example

B. Circuit Modeling and Simulation

By developing ABM models, we have appropriate building blocks that can be implemented with analog circuitry. The circuit modeling and simulation stage is performed in software using commercially available electronic device macro-models. The key element of this research is the operational transconductance amplifier (OTA) [5]. The OTA is a voltage-controlled current source with an externally controlled gain. This extends the boundaries of basic op-amps and makes realizable designs that were previously unobtainable.

Since the OTA has externally controllable gains, only one hardware design is required with the capabilities of reconfiguring system parameters via these gains. With the model design and selected CMOS devices, we can simulate, test and debug small and simple power systems. To date we have developed circuit models for generators, lines, and loads [6, 7]. After validation of circuit models and emulator features, the analog emulator can easily move to hardware testing and PCB layout and design.

C. PC Board Development and Emulation

Next is the development of a Printed Circuit Board (PCB) prototype. This prototype is based on the circuits constructed and simulated in PSpice software. The PCB allows verification of the circuits and the emulation methodology in analog hardware. Issues such as heat dissipation, energy consumption, data acquisition, system configuration and actuation, noise, and computational accuracy can be analyzed and optimized in analog hardware at this level. Presently, LabVIEW software is utilized for acquiring data and interfacing with the PCB. The main purpose of this hardware stage is to develop a fully functional small-scale emulator in analog hardware.

D. VLSI Board Development and Emulation

In these final steps, we envisage encountering similar issues to those in the previous step of PCB development and emulation. In addition, there are scalability questions: Specifically, which power system sizes can be appropriately represented on a given wafer? For a given system if more than one chip is required, how will issues of interfacing between these chips be accomplished? It should also be noted that since we anticipate sizes of up to 5000 or more buses to be emulated, the issues of data acquisition, configuration and actuation have another dimension: communication processing time. Presently, we are

conducting feasibility studies of VLSI designs for the PSoC with these issues in mind.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of this analog power system emulator has consisted of software and hardware components. Power flow cases were conducted in simulation and analog hardware to verify the results from the emulator. Presented here are results for ABM based PSpice simulations and hardware results for a three bus power system emulator. The results are compared directly to PowerWorld's digital load flow results. The system consists of two generators (one slack), three lossless transmission lines, and one constant current load. Fig. 3 shows the PowerWorld system with load flow results. These results are compared to the software and hardware results of the analog emulator. Specifically the generator angle and load bus voltages.

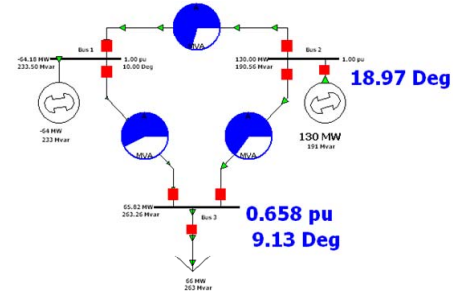


Figure 3. PowerWorld Results for 3 Bus Power System

PowerWorld only provides the steady-state solution; no dynamics are incorporated into the models. Conversely, the analog emulator includes dynamics in the generator modeling [7], even though our focus in these tests is on steady-state values. The test setup is shown in Fig. 4 for the analog emulator testing. Generator 1 is connected to the slack bus and the swing equation model represents Generator 2. The network module consists of the three transmission lines of the system and the load module is a constant current load. The emulator was setup based on the parameters from the PowerWorld case and the system was energized with only the slack bus generator connected. At a specified time generator 2 was switched into the system causing a disturbance. Once the transient settles, the emulator yields the steady-state solution that corresponds to standard load-flow results.

A. ABM Emulation Results

In our emulation testing the voltage was arbitrarily scaled by a factor of two. In other words, one volt per unit in PowerWorld corresponds to two volts in the analog hardware. The ABM simulation results are shown in Fig. 5. The plot shows the generator angle in radians and the real and imaginary load bus voltages. The simulation time is not sped up in this case. The second generator is switched into the system at five seconds and the transient settles to steady state around 8.5 seconds. The results are tabulated in Table 1.

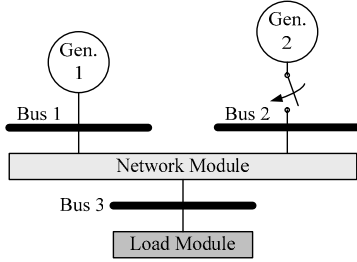


Figure 4. Three Bus Power System Emulation Setup

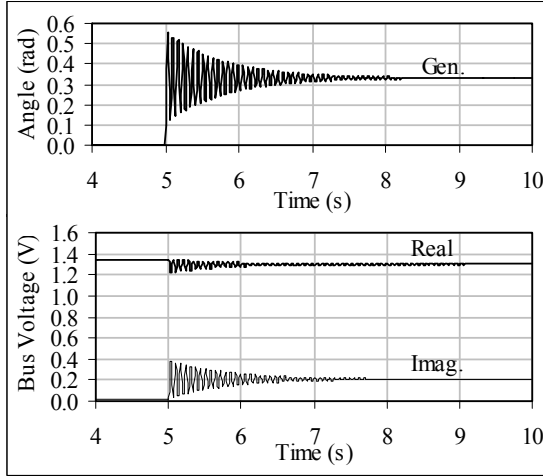


Figure 5. ABM Emulation Results for Three Bus Power System

B. Hardware Emulation Results

Fig. 6 is a scope capture from the hardware test, which monitors the generator angle, real load bus voltage, and the imaginary load bus voltage. The real and imaginary load bus voltages are indicated on the plot as 1.31 and 0.200 volts respectively. Table 1 shows the results from hardware testing and software simulation of the emulator along with the PowerWorld simulation. The PowerWorld load bus voltages were converted into rectangular coordinates and scaled by a factor of two to match the analog emulation.

As can be seen the emulation in both software and hardware are very close to the PowerWorld solutions. While the analog computation method lacks precision compared to digital methods the accuracy is quite acceptable. In addition, the hardware emulation was conducted faster than the ABM emulation, which was in real time. Comparing Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, the speedup for this example was close to 2000 times faster than real time. This can be adjusted to higher or lower, if desired, computational speedups. This can be extremely advantageous in contingency studies when many power flow cases need to be computed in a short period of time. Notably, the speed of analog computation is relatively independent of network size and model complexity. More accurate models can be introduced in analog form without sacrificing computational speed as in digital methods.

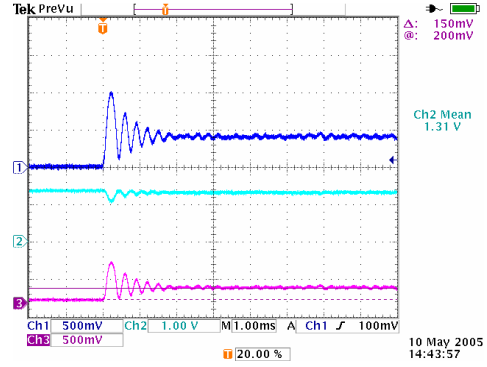


Figure 6. Hardware Emulation Results for Three Bus Power System

TABLE I. POWERWORLD AND EMULATOR COMPARISON

		<i>PowerWorld</i>	<i>ABM Emulation</i>	<i>Hardware Emulation</i>
Generator Angle (Deg.)		18.97	18.97	20.40
Load Bus Voltage (V)	Real	1.30	1.30	1.31
	Imaginary	0.21	0.21	0.20

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has exhibited exciting possibilities involved in analog emulation of power systems. The work will lead to the eventual development of a Power System on a Chip (PSoC) that will allow users to obtain analytical results at faster rates that were previously unobtainable. This will offer alternative solutions to growing computational demands such as look-ahead capabilities that lead to enhanced situational awareness of power grids. Future work includes dynamic/transient analysis of power systems as well as VLSI development.

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