

Introduction to Arbitrary/Function Generators Instructor's Guide



A collection of lab exercises to introduce you to the basic features and functions of an arbitrary/function generator in order to generate common stimulus signals for electronic measurements.



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Laboratory Experiment Instructor's Guide Introduction

Objectives

- 1. The purpose of this Instructor's Guide is to:
 - a. Expand the training steps with additional oscilloscope and signal generator screen and front panel images to assist students who may have questions.
 - b. Provide answers for each exercise.

Instructor's notes are in **bold blue text**.

Laboratory Experiment Introduction

Objectives

- 1. Understand the block diagram and basic controls of an Arbitrary/Function Generator.
- 2. Learn how to generate several basic electronic signals.
- 3. Learn how to verify the signal's parameters with oscilloscope measurements.

Equipment List

- 1. One Tektronix AFG3000 Series Arbitrary/Function Generator (excluding the AFG3011 model).
- 2. One 50Ω BNC cable.
- 3. One Tektronix MSO2000 or DPO2000 Series digital oscilloscope.

Overview of an Arbitrary/Function Generator

Introduction

An Arbitrary/Function Generator (AFG) is an electronic test instrument that generates a wide variety of electrical signals. You can use AFGs to simply generate a series of basic test signals, replicate real-world signals, or create signals that are not otherwise available. These signals can then be used to learn more about how a circuit works, to characterize an electronic component, and to verify electronic theories.



Figure 1: Tektronix Arbitrary/Function Generator

AFGs are most commonly used to generate basic test signals such as a:

- **Sine Wave**: A curved wave shape defined by the mathematical sine function.
- Square Wave: A wave shape consisting of repeating square pulses.
- Pulse Wave: A waveform with a fast rising edge, a period of time at a constant amplitude, and a fast falling edge.

AFGs can also generate a variety of modulated signals such as:

 Amplitude Modulation (AM): A type of analog modulation in which amplitude variations embed lower-frequency information into a carrier signal of higher frequency.













- 4. When you press a side bezel button to change a numerical parameter, the display will indicate which digit can be changed with the thumbwheel. You can use the arrow keys by the thumbwheel to select which digit is selected. You can also simply type in the numerical value with the front panel key pad. As you type in the numbers, a menu of relevant units are presented and you can select them with a press of a side bezel button.
- 5. You can easily switch between input formats with dedicated front panel buttons. For example, you may want to specify a sine wave by frequency but specify a pulse train by period. The front panel shortcut keys switch easily between parameter input modes.
- 6. Select the Run mode. For these labs, this will usually be Continuous.
- 7. Press the Output On button to turn on the output. To protect your circuit, the output is off by default and only activated when you are ready for a signal.



Key Points to Remember

- 1. An Arbitrary/Function Generator (AFG) generates a wide variety of electrical signals. You can use AFGs to generate a series of basic test signals, replicate real-world signals, or create signals that are not otherwise available.
- 2. The four most important parameters used to specify the performance of an AFG are bandwidth, sample rate, memory depth, and vertical resolution.
- 3. To set up an AFG, you need to select the type of signal to generate, the amplitude and offset, frequency or period, and other signal parameters. This requires using three sets of controls: function, run mode, and the specific parameters for the selected signal.

Exercise

- 1. Describe one real-world situation in which you might need an AFG to test your circuit.
 - To replicate a sensor signal. For example, if I were troubleshooting a circuit that reads and analyzes data from a sensor (oxygen, temperature, hazardous materials, etc.), then I may need to replicate different scenarios to check my circuit's response.
 - To generate a clock for my digital circuit before the oscillator circuit is designed or working properly.
 - To stress test my device. I may want to test my device with an input signal that has different signal impairments noise, jitter, high voltage, etc.





Key Points to Remember

- 1. The AFG3000 Series signal generator has 50 Ω output impedance.
- 2. It is important to match the source and load impedances to assure proper signal amplitudes, maximize power transfer, and to minimize reflections, especially at high frequencies.
- 3. Because the MSO/DPO2000 Series oscilloscopes have a high input impedance, you need to set the AFG3000 Series to work correctly with a high-impedance load.

Exercise

- Which of the following statements is <u>not</u> true concerning the default state of the AFG3000?
 a. Generates a 1 MHz square wave.

 - b. It has a 50 Ω output impedance.
 - c. It generates a 2 Vpk-pk signal across a 1 $M\Omega$ load.

Answer: a

- 2. Why is it important for the source and load impedances to be matched?
 - a. Assure proper signal amplitudes.
 - b. Maximize power transfer.
 - c. Minimize reflections, especially at high frequencies.
 - d. All the above.

Answer: d

Generating Sine Wave Signals

Using the AFG3000 to Generate a Sine Wave

- 1. The following steps will explore using an AFG to generate a sine wave while using an oscilloscope to monitor the signal.
 - a. Turn the inner **Zoom** Wave Inspector control on the MSO/DPO2000 clockwise to examine an individual cycle of the sine wave.



- c. Press the MSO/DPO2000 front panel **Measure** button to display the automatic measurements menu.
- d. Press the **Add Measurement** bottom bezel button. The oscilloscope's automatic measurements will be used to verify that the signal is generated as expected.



e. On the AFG3000 keypad, press the **5** button and press the **MHz** side bezel button to directly enter a **5.000... MHz** frequency. Notice that the oscilloscope's frequency measurement shows 5 MHz as expected.



- 3. The most common way to view signals on an oscilloscope is in the "time domain", that is, where the X axis represents time. Another way to represent a signal is in the "frequency domain" with a Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) display, where the horizontal axis represents frequency.
 - a. Press the MSO/DPO2000 front panel **M** button to display the Math menu.
 - b. Press the **FFT** bottom bezel button.
 - c. Press the Menu Off button once to remove the side menu.
- 4. You'll notice that there is one dominant frequency component. The horizontal axis starts at 0 Hz at the left side of the display and the horizontal scale is 5 MHz/div, so the "fundamental" frequency is 5 MHz.



a. Using the MSO/DPO2000 multipurpose b control, set the Math Vertical Scale to 10.0 dB.



Generating Square Wave Signals

Using the AFG3000 to Generate a Square Wave

- 1. In addition to sine waves, the AFG3000 Series family is able to generate other standard waveform types: square waves, pulses, ramps and more. In the following series of steps, we will explore generating square wave signals.
 - a. Press the AFG3000 front panel **Square** button to generate a square wave signal at the same fundamental frequency as the sine wave in the previous experiment.
 - b. Press the AFG3000 front panel Frequency/Period button. Set the frequency to 5 MHz.
 - c. Press the AFG3000 front panel Amplitude button. Set the amplitude to 2 V_{pk-pk}.
 - d. Look at the oscilloscope display. Notice there are frequency components which occur at integer multiples of the fundamental frequency. These are called harmonics.



2. As we know from Fourier Analysis theory, an ideal square wave has a spectrum consisting of the fundamental and odd harmonics. Because this is an imperfect square wave, there are some even harmonics, but they're much smaller than the odd harmonics. Remember, the FFT vertical scale is logarithmic!

Key Points to Remember

- 1. To program the AFG3000 to generate a square wave, you must define a frequency (or period) and amplitude. The AFG3000 will pre-set these values which you can then change for your application.
- 2. An ideal square wave has a spectrum consisting of the fundamental and odd harmonics.

Exercise

1. What is the amplitude of the third and fifth harmonic of the 5 MHz, 2 V_{pk-pk} square wave? Hint: You may want to turn off the channel 1 (yellow) waveform by pressing the yellow **1** front panel button and either use the oscilloscope's graticule or cursors to measure the harmonics.



When done, press the **Cursors** front panel button twice to remove cursors. Press the yellow channel **1** front panel button to bring the yellow waveform back on the display then press the **M** front panel button to overlay the FFT display on top. Press the **Menu Off** button to remove menus.

Generating Digital Signals

Using the AFG3000 to Generate a Digital Pulse Stream

- 1. The previous waveforms you generated were centered around ground. However, most digital signals are not. Instead, they typically extend from a lower value of about 0 V to a high value of a few volts. In this section, we will explore creating digital pulse streams commonly used in digital test applications.
 - a. Press the AFG3000 front panel **Pulse** button. By default, the AFG3000's pulse waveform looks the same as a square wave. However, the pulse waveform allows you to adjust more signal parameters.
- 2. By adjusting the parameters of the pulse waveform, you can easily produce digital signals. For example, you can generate a 1.8 V digital clock pulse signal with a 25% duty cycle (the signal is high for 25% of each period).
 - a. Press the AFG3000 front panel Amplitude/High button twice to select the High parameter.
 - b. On the AFG3000 keyboard, type in **1.8** and press the **Enter** button to directly specify a 1.8V high signal level.
 - c. Press the AFG3000 front panel Offset/Low button to select the Low parameter.
 - On the AFG3000 keypad, type in 0 and press the Enter button to directly specify a low level of 0 mV.
 - e. Press the AFG3000 front panel Duty/Width button to select the Duty cycle parameter.
 - f. Using the thumbwheel set the Duty cycle to **25.000...%**.

g. Notice that, as you change the duty cycle of the waveform, the harmonics vary considerably. Specifically notice the amplitudes of the higher-order harmonics.





Generating Modulated Signals with AFGs

Introduction

Amplitude Modulation

Amplitude Modulation (AM) is a technique often used to transmit radio signals. AM changes the amplitude of the carrier waveform as the amplitude of the modulating signal varies.



Glossary Of Terms for AM Modulation

- **Carrier Waveform**: The original waveform whose amplitude parameter is modified.
- **Modulating Waveform**: The signal that determines the changes to the original waveform (carrier). In this lab, we will use an internally generated sine wave signal.
- **Modulation Depth**: The extent of the amplitude variation expressed as a percentage. At 0% modulation, the output amplitude is half of the set amplitude. At 100% modulation, the output amplitude equals the selected value. Modulation depth can be set from 0% to 120% modulation.

An AM signal is represented by the equation

 $v(t) = A_c [1 + am(t)] \cos(2\pi f_c t)$

Where:

 A_c = the signal amplitude

a = modulation index

m(t) = normalized modulating signal (maximum value is 1)

 $f_c = carrier frequency$

Using the AFG3000 to Generate an AM Modulated Signal

- 1. In this section, you will use an AFG to generate an amplitude modulated (AM) waveform and examine its frequency components with an oscilloscope.
 - a. Press the AFG3000, front panel Sine button.
 - b. Press the AFG3000 front panel Frequency/Period button.
 - c. On the AFG3000 keypad, type in **500** and press the **kHz** side bezel button to directly enter a 500.000... kHz "carrier" frequency.
 - d. Using the MSO/DPO2000 front panel Horizontal **Scale** control, set the horizontal scale to **200 usec/div**.
 - e. Notice the MSO/DPO2000 FFT frequency axis has changed to 125 kHz/div.

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2. When we look at a 500 kHz sine wave on the oscilloscope, we see the expected single component at the fundamental 500 kHz frequency.				
a. Press the AFG3000 front panel Modulation button to display the modulation menu.				
 With the default 10 kHz AM modulation, we see the expected +/- 10 kHz AM side-bands around the fundamental. 				
S00mV 200.08 125kHz 200.08 125kHz Tree 502.08Hz Tree 502.08Hz				
a. Press the AM Frequency side bezel button to select the AM Frequency parameter.				
 b. On the AFG3000 keypad, type 50 and press the kHz side bezel button to directly enter a 50.00 kHz "carrier" frequency. 				
c. When we turn on 50 kHz AM modulation, we see the expected +/- 50 kHz AM side-bands around the fundamental.				
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Key Points to Remember				
 The FFT of a sine wave has a single component at the fundamental frequency. With AM modulation, the FFT of the signal has sidebands around the fundamental. The sidebands are spaced the same distance from the fundamental as the modulation frequency. 				





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5.	As you increase the frequency of a sine wave, the position of the fundamental component in the FFT display will					
	a. Move to the right					
	b. Move to the left					
	c. M	ove higher on the display				
Answer: a						
6.	This f	nal exercise will require the use of the skills and knowledge gained to this point.				
	a. S	et up the AFG3000 to generate a 75 kHz ramp signal with $V_{Low} = 0 V$ and $V_{High} = 1 V$.				
	 Press the front panel Default button on the AFG3000 and the OK side bezel button. 					
	 Press the Output Menu side bezel button, press the Load Impedance side bezel button, press the High Z side bezel button, and press the Top Menu front panel button. 					
	 Press the Ramp function button on the front panel. 					
	 Press the Amplitude/High button to select High Level. Type in "1" and press the Volts side bezel button. Press the Offset/Low button to select Low Level. Type in "0" and press the Volts side bezel button. Press the Frequency/Period button. Type in "75" and press the kHz side bezel button. Press the Channel 1 On button on the AFG3000. 					
		Ilek Bun Trig'd Noise Filter Off Image: State of the				
	b. P st	ress the MSO/DPO2000's front panel Default Setup button to set the oscilloscope to a known ate. Remember to set the probe attenuation to 1X!				



- Press the Default Setup button
- Press the channel 1 yellow front panel button and press the Probe Setup bottom bezel button then press the Set to 1X side bezel button to set the probe attenuation to 1X
- Press the front panel red M button and select the FFT bottom bezel button
- Press the front panel Menu Off button twice



d. Measure the frequency and amplitude of the third and fifth harmonics.



3''	harmonic	@ 225 kHz:	Amplitude = -57.1 dBV
5 th	harmonic	@ 375 kHz:	Amplitude = -41.4 dBV

- e. Set the symmetry of the ramp signal to 100%.
 - On the AFG3000, press the Ramp function button on the front panel
 - Press the Ramp Parameter Menu side bezel button
 - Press the Set to 100% side bezel button



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