Telephony Solutions: Bell 202 Modem Implementation Using the SX Microcontroller

Application Note 7
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1.0 Introduction

This document describes the use of a Scenix SX Microcontroller to perform the entire signal generation and detection functions required for a fully functional BELL202 modem. These Virtual Peripherals include:

- -DTMF (Dual Tone Multiple Frequency Signalling) generation for dialing.
- -FSK (Frequency Shift Keying) generation for transmitting data.
- -FSK detection for receiving data.
- -UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter) for RS-232 communications with a PC.
- -16-bit timer for delay routines/flashing LED.

A modem is a tool used to allow digital equipment to communicate using regular telephone lines. Modems work by translating an incoming bitstream into a modulated signal, using either an FSK or PSK modulation algorithm. Modems also demodulate an incoming signal back into a bitstream. FSK stands for Frequency Shift Keying, and this modulation technique uses frequency shifts to transmit data. The SX modem uses a frequency of 1300Hz to signify a '1' and 2100Hz to signify a '0'. The maximum baud rate that can be transmitted using FSK is 1200bps. Some applications of Frequency Shift Keying signals include credit card readers, ATM machines, remote monitoring equipment, and Caller ID detection and generation.

The SX Modem also requires some method of dialing out, so it generates DTMF using a single PWM output. DTMF (touch-tone) is the most common method of dialing, and it is used by almost all of the phones in North America. DTMF stands for Dual Tone Multiple Frequency Signalling, meaning it uses two frequencies in combination to indicate which digit is being dialed.

In the past, such telephony functions as FSK (frequency-shift keying) generation and detection, DTMF (dual-tone, multi-frequency) dialing generation and detection, and Caller ID could not be implemented with an 8-bit embedded MCU because performance levels were not high enough to support them. As a result, either a custom MCU had to be designed or a 16- or 32-bit device used. Now, the 8-bit Scenix Semiconductor SX Series MCUs, which have performance reaching 100 MIPS (million instructions per second) and a deterministic interrupt architecture, overcome this roadblock by providing the ability to perform these functions in software.Unlike other MCUs that add functions in the form of additional silicon, the SX Series uses its industry-leading performance to execute functions as software modules, or Virtual Peripherals. These are loaded into a high-speed (10 ns access time) on-chip flash/EEPROM program memory and executed as required. In addition, a set of on-chip hardware peripherals is available to perform operations that cannot readily be done in software, such as timers, comparators, and oscillators.

To minimize code space and required processing power, the SX modem uses two artificial sine generation VP's and one PWM output to generate both FSK and DTMF signals. With all subroutines and Virtual Peripherals integrated, the Scenix FSK modem solution is less than 900 words long, leaving 1.1K of program memory left over to add such features as CallerID parsing, ring detection, error detection/correction, and an AT-command set.

Figure 1-1.

Isolation Circuitry

Isolation circuitry is needed for any circuit meant to interface with a telephone line. There is a different isolation standard for every country so check which one is used locally.

Signal Conditioning

FSK Input

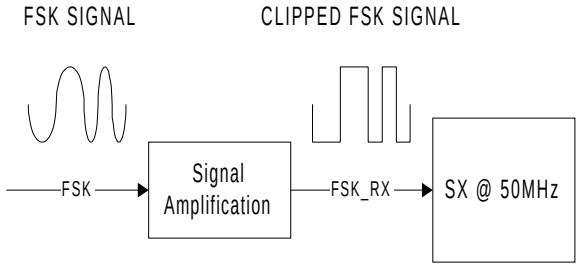

Figure 2.

The software implementation of FSK detection is very simple. The transitions on the input pin are timed by the software. If the transitions occur within a specified time, then a high frequency is being detected, otherwise a low frequency is being detected

Since the software uses a Schmidtt Trigger input on the SX, the input FSK signal must be amplified until clipping to trigger the Schmidtt Trigger levels.