

DESCRIPTION

The NE/SA614A is an improved monolithic low-power FM IF system incorporating two limiting intermediate frequency amplifiers, quadrature detector, muting, logarithmic received signal strength indicator, and voltage regulator. The NE/SA614A features higher IF bandwidth (25MHz) and temperature compensated RSSI and limiters permitting higher performance application compared with the NE/SA604. The NE/SA614A is available in a 16-lead dual-in-line plastic and 16-lead SO (surface-mounted miniature package).

FEATURES

- Low-power consumption
3.3mA typical
- Temperature compensated logarithmic Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI) with a

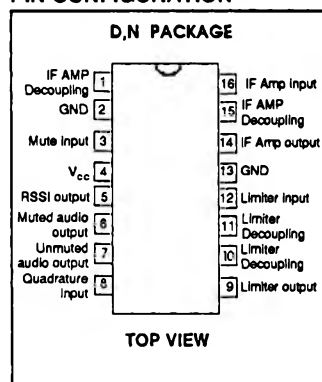
dynamic range in excess of 90dB

- Two audio outputs - muted and unmuted
- Low external component count; suitable for crystal/ceramic filters
- Excellent sensitivity: $1.5\mu\text{V}$ across input pins ($0.22\mu\text{V}$ into 50Ω matching network) for 12dB SINAD (Signal to Noise and Distortion ratio) at 455kHz
- SA614A meets consumer cellular radio specifications

APPLICATIONS

- Consumer cellular radio FM IF
- Consumer communications receivers
- Intermediate frequency amplification and detection up to 25MHz
- RF level meter
- Spectrum analyzer
- Instrumentation
- FSK and ASK data receivers

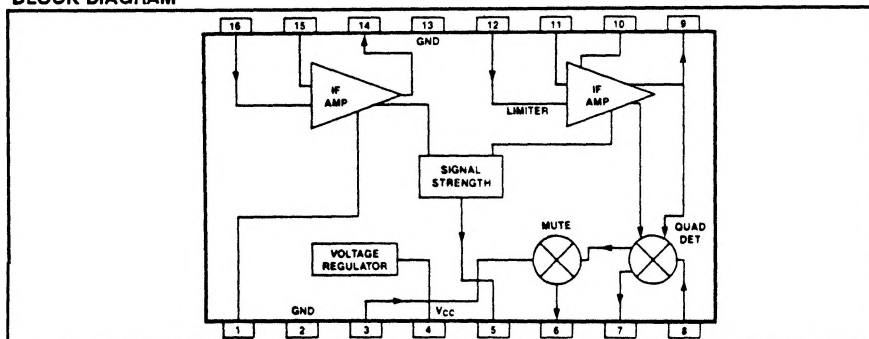
PIN CONFIGURATION



ORDERING INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION	TEMPERATURE RANGE	ORDER CODE
16-Pin Plastic DIP	0 to +70°C	NE614AN
16-Pin Plastic SO (Surface-mounted miniature package);	0 to +70°C	NE614AD
16-Pin Plastic DIP	-40 to +85°C	SA614AN
16-Pin Plastic SO (Surface-mounted miniature package);	-40 to +85°C	SA614AD

BLOCK DIAGRAM



September 13, 1988

NE/SA614A

ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM RATINGS		
SYMBOL AND PARAMETER	RATING	UNIT
Maximum operating voltage	9	V
Storage temperature	-65 to +150	°C
Operating temperature		
NE614A	0 to 70	°C
SA614A	-40 to +85	°C

PARAMETER	TEST CONDITIONS	NE614A			SA614A			UNIT
		MIN	TYP	MAX	MIN	TYP	MAX	
Power supply voltage range		4.5		8.0	4.5		8.0	V
DC current drain		2.5	3.3	4.0	2.5	3.3	4.0	mA
Mute switch input threshold (on)		1.7			1.7			V
(off)				1.0			1.0	V

PARAMETER	TEST CONDITIONS	NE/SA614A			UNIT
		MIN	TYP	MAX	
Input limiting - 3dB	Test at Pin 16		-92		dBm/50Ω
AM rejection	80% AM 1kHz	25	33		dB
Recovered audio level	15nF de-emphasis	60	175	260	mV _{rms}
Recovered audio level	150pF de-emphasis		530		mV _{rms}
SINAD sensitivity	RF level -97dBm		12		dB
THD		-30	-42		dB
Signal-to-noise ratio	No modulation for noise		68		dB
RSSI output	RF level = -118dBm	0	160	800	mV
	RF level = -68dBm	1.7	2.50	3.3	V
	RF level = -18dBm	3.6	4.80	5.8	V
RSSI range	R ₄ = 100k Pin 5		80		dB
RSSI accuracy	R ₄ = 100k Pin 5		±2.0		dB
IF input impedance		1.4	1.6		kΩ
IF output impedance		0.85	1.0		kΩ
Limiter input impedance		1.4	1.6		kΩ
Unmuted audio output resistance			58		kΩ
Muted audio output resistance			58		kΩ

NOTE:

1. NE614A data sheets refer to power at 50Ω input termination; about 21dB less power actually enters the internal 1.5k input.

NE614A (50)	NE614A (1.5k)/NE615 (1.5k)
-97dBm	-118dBm
-47dBm	-68dBm
+3dBm	-18dBm

The NE615 and NE614A are both derived from the same basic die. The NE615 performance plots are directly applicable to the NE614A.

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

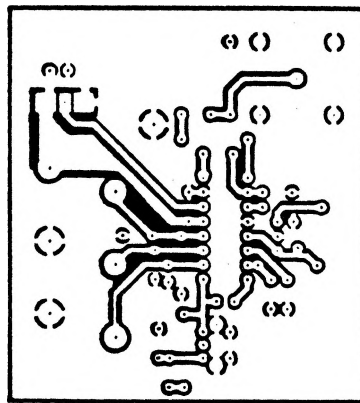
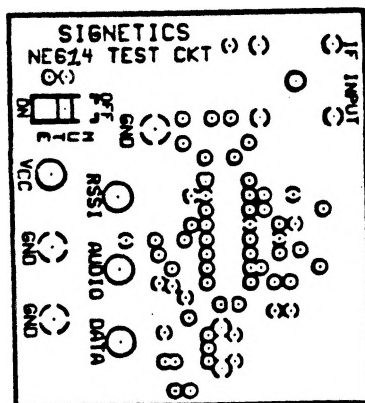
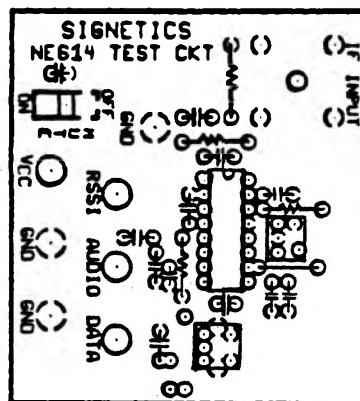
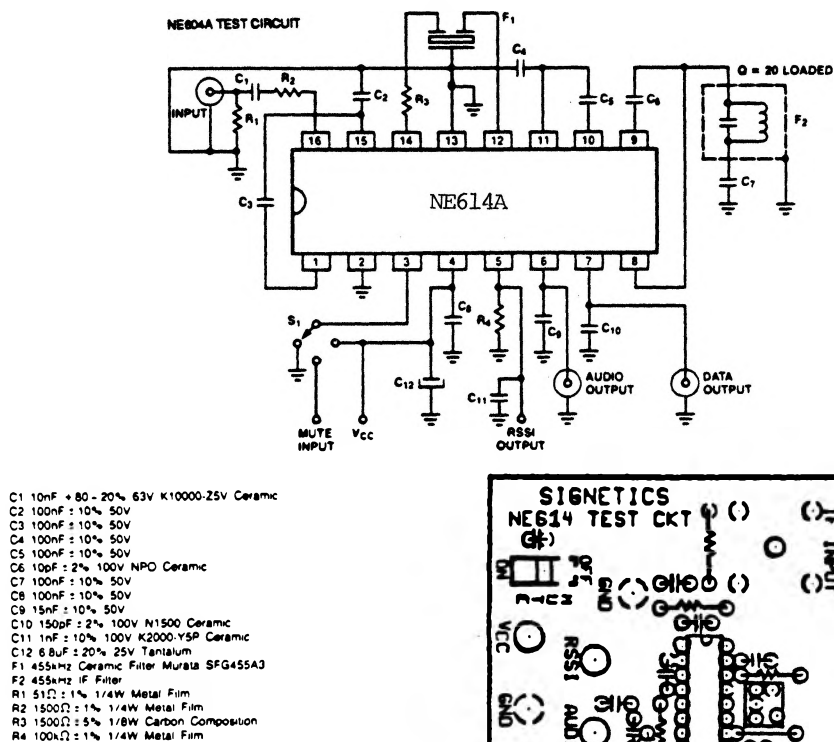


Figure 1. NE614A Test Circuit

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

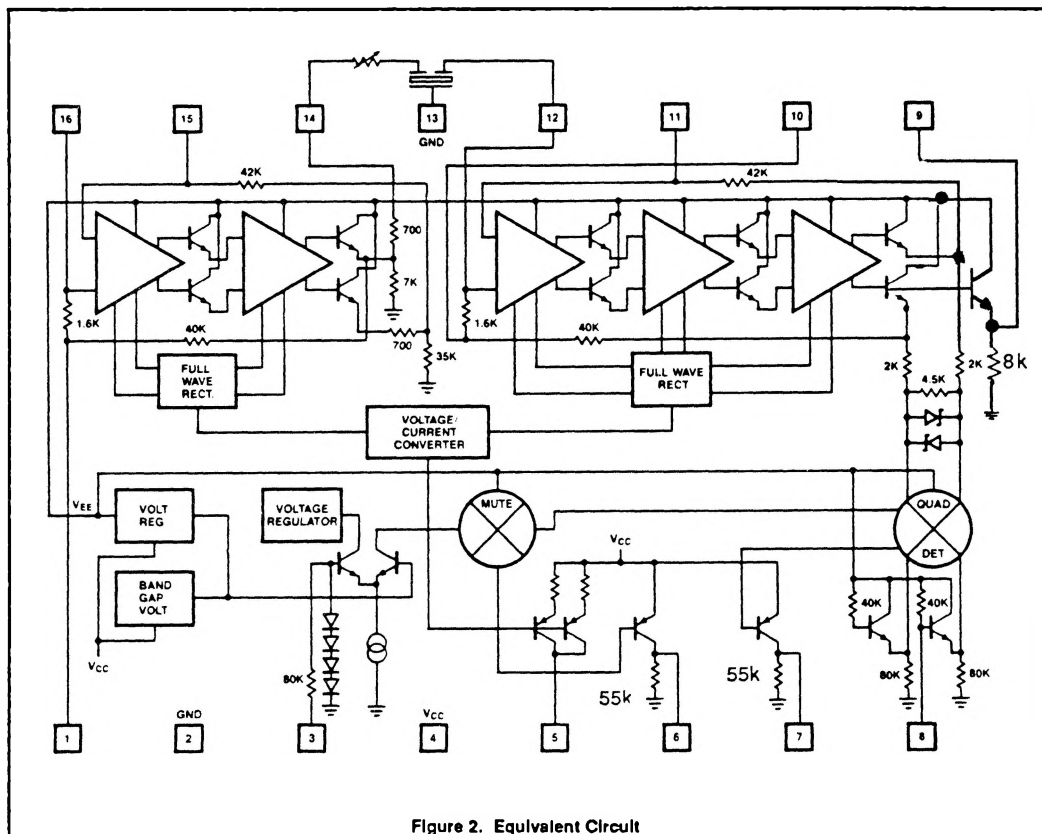


Figure 2. Equivalent Circuit

Circuit Description

The NE/SA614A is a very high gain, high frequency device. Correct operation is not possible if good RF layout and gain stage practices are not used. The NE/SA614A can not be evaluated independent of circuit, components, and board layout. A physical layout which correlates to the electrical limits is shown in Figure 1. This configuration can be used as the basis for production layout.

The NE/SA614A is an IF signal processing system suitable for IF frequencies as high as 21.4MHz. The device consists of two limiting amplifiers, quadrature detector, direct audio output, muted audio output, and signal strength indicator (with log output char-

acteristic). The sub-systems are shown in Figure 2. A typical application with 45MHz input and 455kHz IF is shown in Figure 3.

IF Amplifiers

The IF amplifier section consists of two log-limiting stages. The first consists of two differential amplifiers with 39dB of gain and a small signal bandwidth of 41MHz (when driven from a 50Ω source). The output of the first limiter is a low impedance emitter follower with 1kΩ of equivalent series resistance. The second limiting stage consists of three differential amplifiers with a gain of 62dB and a small signal AC bandwidth of 28MHz. The outputs of the final differential stage are buffered to the internal quadrature detector. One of the outputs is available at Pin 9 to

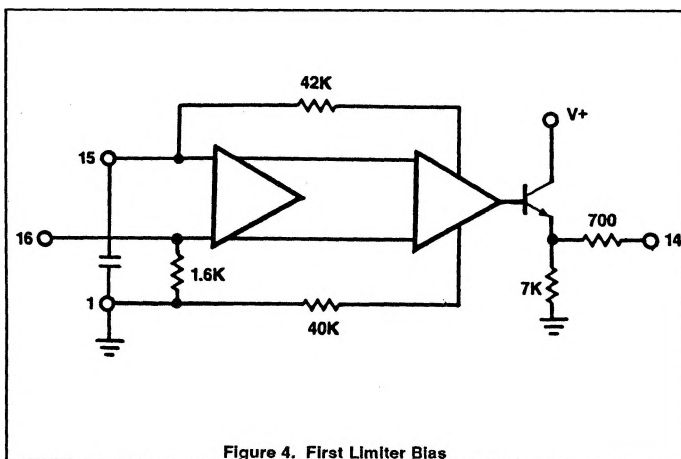
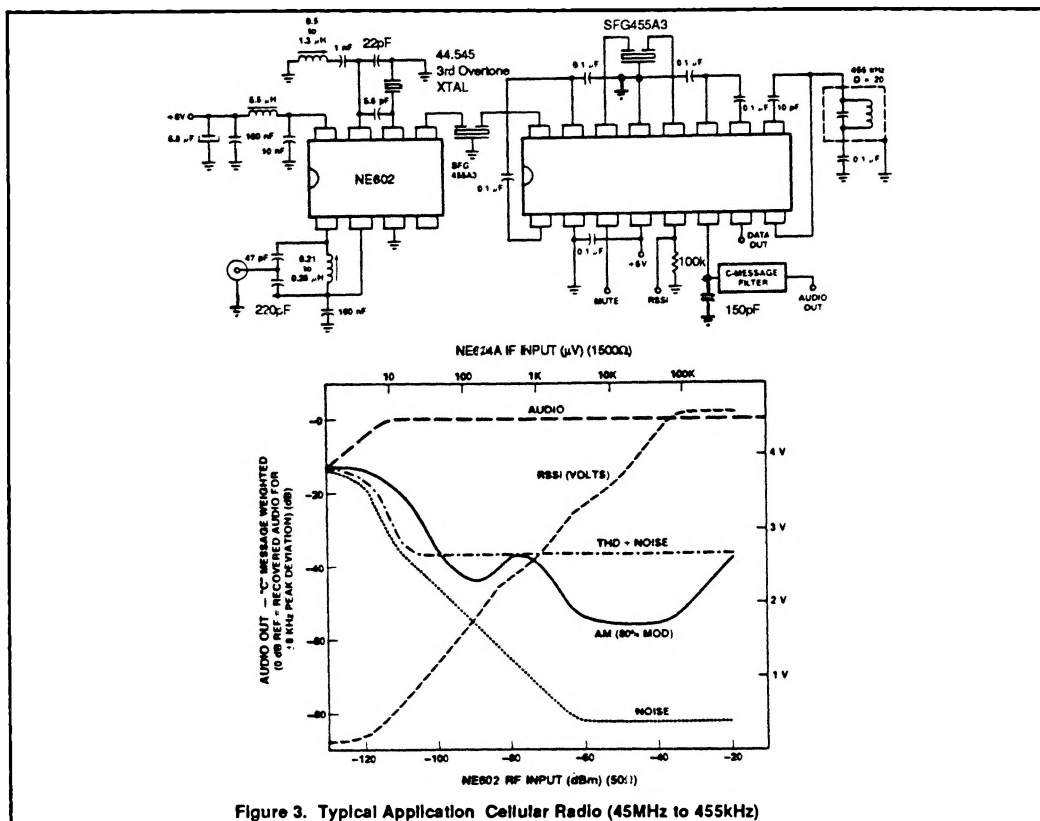
drive an external quadrature capacitor and L/C quadrature tank.

Both of the limiting amplifier stages are DC biased using feedback. The buffered output of the final differential amplifier is fed back to the input through 42kΩ resistors. As shown in Figure 2 the input impedance is established for each stage by tapping one of the feedback resistors 1.6kΩ from the input. This requires one additional decoupling capacitor from the tap point to ground.

Because of the very high gain, bandwidth and input impedance of the limiters, there is a very real potential for instability at IF frequencies above 455kHz. The basic phenomenon is shown in Figure 6. Distributed feed-

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A



back (capacitance, inductance and radiated fields) forms a divider from the output of the limiters back to the inputs (including the RF input). If this feedback divider does not cause attenuation greater than the gain of the forward path, then oscillation or low level regeneration is likely. If regeneration occurs, two symptoms may be present: (1) The RSSI output will be high with no signal input (should nominally be 250mV or lower), and (2) the demodulated output will demonstrate a threshold. Above a certain input level, the limited signal will begin to dominate the regeneration, and the demodulator will begin to operate in a "normal" manner.

There are three primary ways to deal with regeneration: (1) Minimize the

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

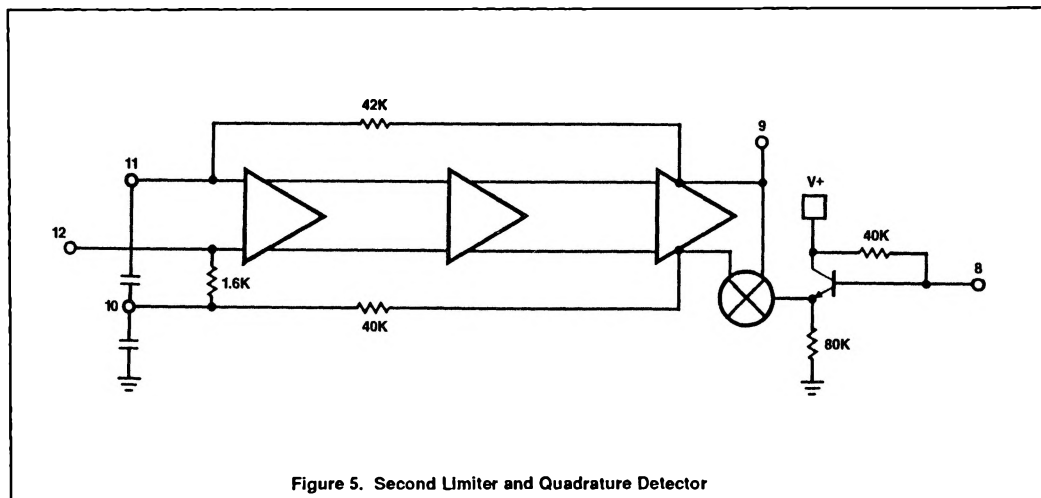


Figure 5. Second Limiter and Quadrature Detector

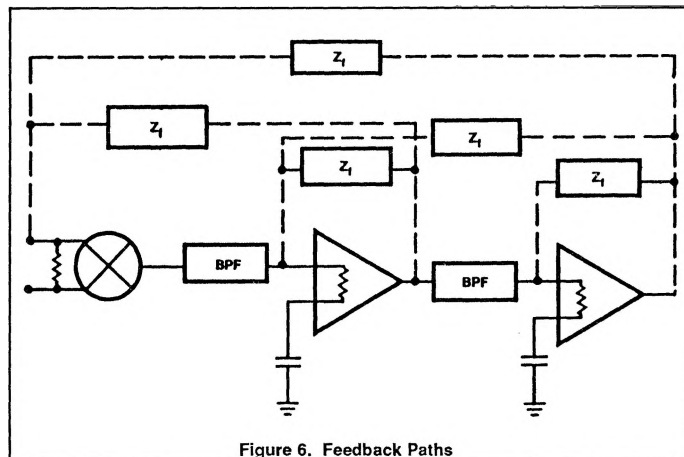


Figure 6. Feedback Paths

feedback by gain stage isolation, (2) lower the stage input impedances, thus increasing the feedback attenuation factor, and (3) reduce the gain. Gain reduction can effectively be accomplished by adding attenuation between stages. This can also lower the input impedance if well planned. Examples of impedance/gain adjustment are shown in Figure 7. Reduced gain will result in reduced limiting sensitivity.

A feature of the NE614A IF amplifiers, which is not specified, is low phase shift. The NE614A is fabricated with a 10GHz process with very small collec-

tor capacitance. It is advantageous in some applications that the phase shift changes only a few degrees over a wide range of signal input amplitudes. Additional information will be provided in the upcoming product specification (this is a preliminary specification) when characterization is complete.

Stability Considerations

The high gain and bandwidth of the NE614A in combination with its very low currents permit circuit implementation with superior performance. However, stability must be maintained and, to do that, every possible feedback

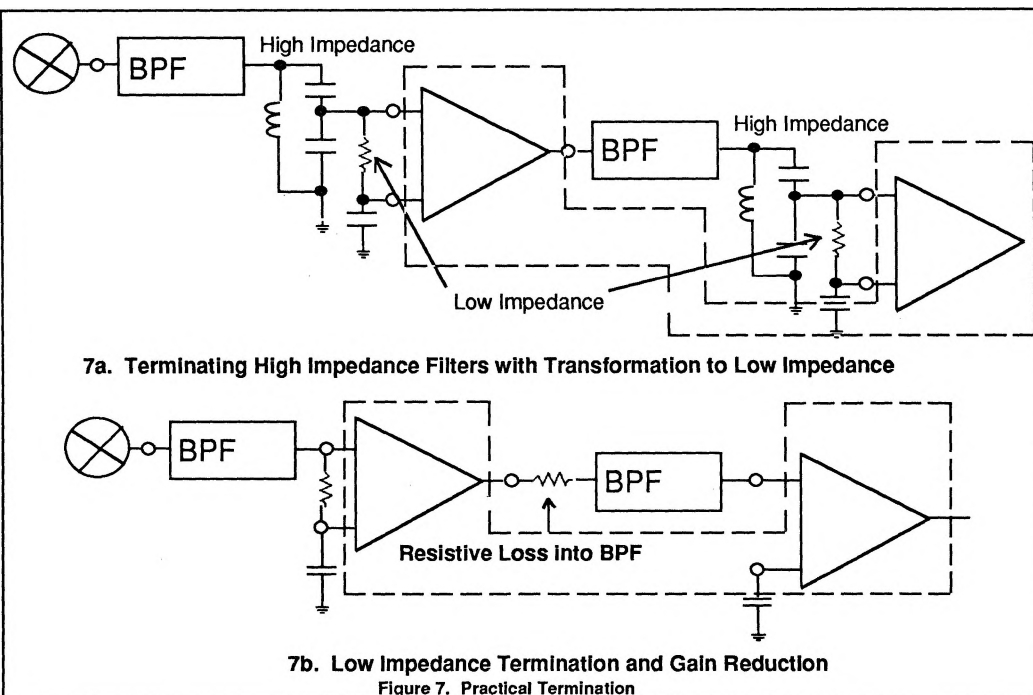
mechanism must be addressed. These mechanisms are: 1) Supply lines and ground, 2) stray layout inductances and capacitances, 3) radiated fields, and 4) phase shift. As the system IF increases, so must the attention to fields and strays. However, ground and supply loops cannot be overlooked, especially at lower frequencies. Even at 455kHz, using the test layout in Figure 1, instability will occur if the supply line is not decoupled with two high quality RF capacitors, a 0.1μF monolithic right at the V_{cc} pin, and a 6.8μF tantalum on the supply line. An electrolytic is not an adequate substitute. At 10.7MHz, a 1μF tantalum has proven acceptable with this layout. Every layout must be evaluated on its own merit, but don't underestimate the importance of good supply bypass.

At 455kHz, if the layout of Figure 1 or one substantially similar is used, it is possible to directly connect ceramic filters to the input and between limiter stages with no special consideration. At frequencies above 2MHz, some input impedance reduction is usually necessary. Figure 7 demonstrates a practical means.

As illustrated in Figure 8, 430Ω external resistors are applied in parallel to the internal 1.6kΩ load resistors, thus presenting approximately 330Ω to

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A



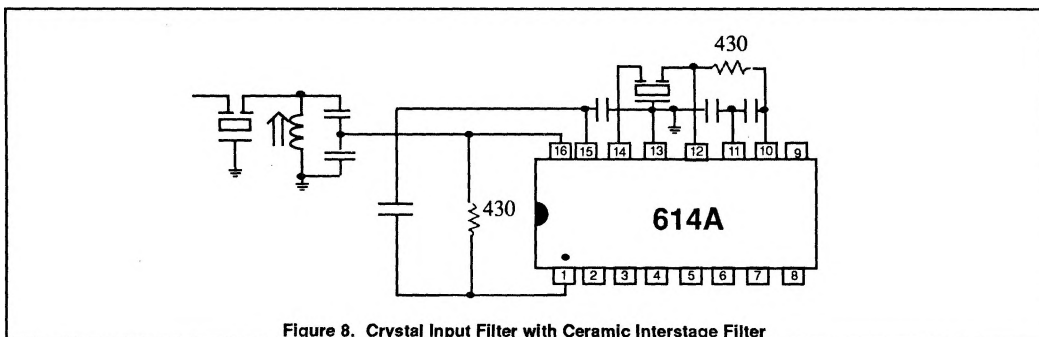
the filters. The input filter is a crystal type for narrow-band selectivity. The filter is terminated with a tank which transforms to 330Ω . The interstage filter is a ceramic type which doesn't contribute to system selectivity, but does suppress wideband noise and stray signal pickup. In wideband 10.7MHz IFs the input filter can also be ceramic, directly connected to Pin 16.

In some products it may be impractical to utilize shielding, but this mechanism may be appropriate to 10.7MHz and

21.4MHz IF. One of the benefits of low current is lower radiated field strength, but lower does not mean non-existent. A spectrum analyzer with an active probe will clearly show IF energy with the probe held in the proximity of the second limiter output or quadrature coil. No specific recommendations are provided, but mechanical shielding should be considered if layout, bypass, and input impedance reduction do not solve a stubborn instability.

The final stability consideration is

phase shift. The phase shift of the limiters is very low, but there is phase shift contribution from the quadrature tank and the filters. Most filters demonstrate a large phase shift across their passband (especially at the edges). If the quadrature detector is tuned to the edge of the filter passband, the combined filter and quadrature phase shift can aggravate stability. This is not usually a problem, but should be kept in mind.

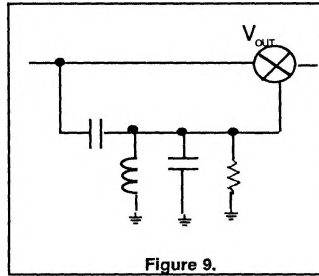


Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

Quadrature Detector

Figure 5 shows an equivalent circuit of the NE614A quadrature detector. It is a multiplier cell similar to a mixer stage. Instead of mixing two different frequencies, it mixes two signals of common frequency but different phase. Internal to the device, a constant amplitude (limited) signal is differentially applied to the lower port of the multiplier. The same signal is applied single ended to an external capacitor at Pin 9. There is a 90° phase shift across the plates of this capacitor, with the phase shifted signal applied to the upper port of the multiplier at Pin 8. A quadrature tank (parallel L/C network) permits frequency selective phase shifting at the IF frequency. This quadrature tank must be returned to ground through a DC blocking capacitor.



$$\text{where } \omega_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L(C_P + C_S)}} \quad (1b)$$

$$Q_1 = R(C_P + C_S)\omega_1 \quad (1c)$$

From the above equation, the phase shift between nodes 1 and 2, or the phase across C_S will be:

$$\phi = \angle V_O - \angle V_N = \quad (2)$$

$$\tan^{-1} \left[\frac{\frac{\omega_1}{Q_1 \omega}}{1 - \left(\frac{\omega_1}{\omega}\right)^2} \right]$$

Figure 10. Is the plot of ϕ vs. $\left(\frac{\omega}{\omega_1}\right)$

It is notable that at $\omega = \omega_1$, the phase shift is $\frac{\pi}{2}$ and the response is close

to a straight line with a slope of

$$\frac{\Delta\phi}{\Delta\omega} = \frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1}$$

The signal V_o would have a phase

shift of $\left[\frac{\pi}{2} - \left(\frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1} \right) \omega \right]$ with respect to the V_{in} .

If $V_{in} = A \sin \omega t$

$$\Rightarrow V_O = A$$

$$\sin \left[\omega t + \frac{\pi}{2} - \left(\frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1} \right) \omega \right]$$

Multiplying the two signals in the mixer, and low pass filtering yields:

$$V_N \cdot V_O = A^2 \sin \omega t \quad (4)$$

$$\sin \left[\omega t + \frac{\pi}{2} - \left(\frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1} \right) \omega \right]$$

after low pass filtering

$$\Rightarrow V_{OUT} = \frac{1}{2} A^2 \quad (5)$$

$$\cos \left[\frac{\pi}{2} - \left(\frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1} \right) \omega \right]$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} A^2 \sin \left(\frac{2Q_1}{\omega_1} \right) \omega$$

$$V_{OUT} \propto 2Q_1 \left(\frac{\omega}{\omega_1} \right) = \quad (6)$$

$$\left[2Q_1 \left(\frac{\omega_1 + \Delta\omega}{\omega_1} \right) \right]$$

$$\text{For } \frac{2Q_1 \omega}{\omega_1} \ll \frac{\pi}{2}$$

Which is the discriminated FM output. (Note that $\Delta\omega$ is the deviation frequency from the carrier ω_c .)

Ref. Krauss, Raab, Bastian; Solid State Radio Eng.; Wiley, 1980, p.311. Example: At 455kHz IF, with ± 5 kHz FM deviation. The max/min normalized frequency will be

$$\frac{455 \pm 5 \text{ kHz}}{455} = 1.010 \text{ or } 0.990$$

Go to the ϕ vs. normalized frequency curves (Figure 10) and draw a vertical

straight line at $\left(\frac{\omega}{\omega_1}\right) = 1.01$. The

curves with $Q = 100$, $Q = 40$ are not linear, but $Q = 20$ and less shows better linearity for this application. Too small Q decreases the amplitude of the discriminated FM signal. (Eq. 6)

\Rightarrow Choose a $Q = 20$.

Frequency discriminator design equations for NE614A

$$V_O = \frac{C_S}{C_P + C_S} \cdot \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\omega_1}{Q_1 S} + \left(\frac{\omega_1}{S}\right)^2} \cdot V_N \quad (1a)$$

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

The internal R of the 614A is 40k. From Eq. 1c, and then 1b, it results that

$$C_p + C_s = 174\text{pF and } L = 0.7\text{mH.}$$

A more exact analysis including the source resistance of the previous stage shows that there is a series and a parallel resonance in the phase detector tank. To make the parallel and series resonances close, and to get maximum attenuation of higher harmonics at 455kHz IF, we have found that a $C_s = 10\text{pF}$ and $C_p = 164\text{pF}$ (commercial values of 150pF or 180pF may be practical), will give the best results. A variable inductor which can be adjusted around 0.7mH should be chosen and optimized for minimum distortion. (For 10.7MHz, a value of $C_s = 1\text{pF}$ is recommended.)

Audio Outputs

Two audio outputs are provided. Both are PNP current-to-voltage converters with 55k Ω nominal internal loads. The unmuted output is always active to permit the use of signaling tones in systems such as cellular radio. The other output can be muted with 70dB typical attenuation. The two outputs have an internal 180° phase difference.

The nominal frequency response of the audio outputs is 300kHz. This response can be increased with the addition of external resistors from the output pins to ground in parallel with the internal 55k resistors, thus lowering the output time constant. Since the output structure is a current-to-voltage converter (current is driven into the resistance, creating a voltage drop), adding external parallel resistance also has the effect of lowering the output audio amplitude and DC level.

This technique of audio bandwidth expansion can be effective in many applications such as SCA receivers and data transceivers. Because the two outputs have a 180° phase relationship, FSK demodulation can be accomplished by applying the two outputs differentially across the inputs of an op amp or comparator. Once the threshold of the reference frequency (or "no-signal" condition) has been established, the two outputs will shift in

opposite directions (higher or lower output voltage) as the input frequency shifts. The output of the comparator will be the logic output. The choice of op amp or comparator will depend on the data rate. With high IF frequency (10MHz and above), and wide IF bandwidth (L/C filters) data rates in excess of 4Mbaud are possible.

RSSI

The "received signal strength indicator", or RSSI, of the NE614A demonstrates monotonic logarithmic output over a range of 90dB. The signal strength output is derived from the summed stage currents in the limiting amplifiers. It is essentially independent of the IF frequency. Thus, unfiltered signals at the limiter inputs, spurious products, or regenerated signals will manifest themselves as RSSI outputs. An RSSI output of greater than 250mV with no signal (or a very small signal) applied, is an indication of possible regeneration or oscillation.

In order to achieve optimum RSSI linearity, there must be a 12dB insertion loss between the first and second limiting amplifiers. With a typical 455kHz ceramic filter, there is a nominal 4dB insertion loss in the filter. An additional 6dB is lost in the interface between the filter and the input of the second limiter. A small amount of additional loss must be introduced with a typical ceramic filter. In the test circuit used for cellular radio applications (Figure 3) the optimum linearity was achieved with a 5.1k Ω resistor from the output of the first limiter (Pin 14) to the input of the interstage filter. With this resistor from Pin 14 to the filter, sensitivity of 0.25 μV for 12dB SINAD was achieved. With the 3.6k Ω resistor, sensitivity was optimized at 0.22 μV for 12dB SINAD with minor change in the RSSI linearity.

Any application which requires optimized RSSI linearity, such as spectrum analyzers, cellular radio, and certain types of telemetry, will require careful attention to limiter interstage component selection. This will be especially true with high IF frequencies which require insertion loss or impedance reduction for stability.

At low frequencies the RSSI makes an excellent logarithmic AC voltmeter.

For data applications the RSSI is effective as an amplitude shift keyed (ASK) data slicer. If a comparator is applied to the RSSI and the threshold set slightly above the no signal level, when an in-band signal is received the comparator will be sliced. Unlike FSK demodulation, the maximum data rate is somewhat limited. An internal capacitor limits the RSSI frequency response to about 100kHz. At high data rates the rise and fall times will not be symmetrical.

The RSSI output is a current-to-voltage converter similar to the audio outputs. However, an external resistor is required. With a 91k Ω resistor, the output characteristic is 0.5V for a 10dB change in the input amplitude.

Additional Circuitry

Internal to the NE614A are voltage and current regulators which have been temperature compensated to maintain the performance of the device over a wide temperature range. These regulators are not accessible to the user.

Low Power FM IF System

NE/SA614A

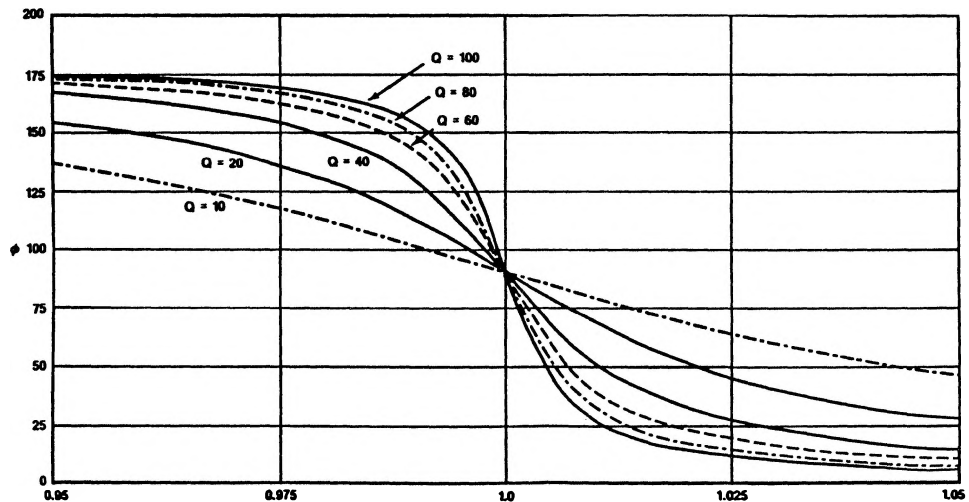


Figure 10. Phase vs. Normalized IF Frequency

$$\frac{\omega}{\omega_1} = 1 + \frac{\Delta\omega}{\omega_1}$$