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M. Crescentini, M. Tartagni, H. Morgan, P.A. Traverso

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# A Compact Low-Noise Broadband Digital Picoammeter Architecture

M. Crescentini<sup>1</sup>, M. Tartagni<sup>1,2</sup>, H. Morgan<sup>3</sup>, and P.A. Traverso<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Electrical, Electronic and Information Engineering (DEI) “Guglielmo Marconi”, Cesena Campus, University of Bologna, Cesena IT-47521, IT.

<sup>2</sup>Advanced Research Center on Electronic Systems (ARCES), Cesena Campus, University of Bologna, Cesena IT-47521, IT.

<sup>3</sup>Electronics and Computer Science & Institute for Life Sciences, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BJ, U.K.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Electrical, Electronic and Information Engineering (DEI) “Guglielmo Marconi”, Bologna Campus, University of Bologna, Bologna IT-40136, IT.

Corresponding author is M. Crescentini: tel: 0039 0547-339236; fax: 0039 0547-339208; e-mail: marco.crescentini3@unibo.it; address: Via Venezia 52, Cesena 47521 (FC), Italy.

## Abstract

A low-noise ( $\leq 4 \text{ fA}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ ), broadband ( $\geq 100 \text{ kHz}$ ) compact architecture and related operation solutions are proposed for portable and low-cost time-domain acquisition of currents with effective resolution in the order of 1 pA and below. The front-end architecture is based on an integrating-differentiating scheme to achieve the optimal performance in terms of input-referred equivalent noise, but it overcomes the typical noise/bandwidth trade-off by making the sampling frequency of the A/D conversion independent from the rate at which the analog front-end is reset. In order to strongly mitigate the main drawback, i.e., the introduction in the system of an inherent time-variance, a Track-and-Hold circuit synchronized with the reset is exploited.

For validation purposes, a dual-channel prototype was implemented in a low-cost CMOS technology. The prototype is characterized by standard figures of merit and is experimentally validated by two simple case studies, which are typical of practical applications.

## Index Terms

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