GPS BLOCK 2R TIME STANDARD ASSEMBLY (TSA) ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract

The underlying philosophy of the GPS 2R TSA architecture is to utilize two frequency sources, one fixed frequency reference source and one system frequency source, and to couple the system frequency source to the reference frequency source via a sample data loop. The system source is used to provide the basic clock frequency and timing for the space vehicle (SV) and it uses a VCXO with high short term stability. The reference source is an atomic frequency standard (AFS) with high long term stability. The architecture can support any type of frequency standard. In the system design rubidium, cesium, and H2 masers outputting a canonical frequency were accommodated. The architecture is software intensive. All VCXO adjustments are digital and are calculated by a processor. They are applied to the VCXO via a DAC.

DESCRIPTION OF TSA ARCHITECTURE

The GPS 2R TSA architecture is illustrated by Figure 1. An AFS is used as a reference frequency source. It operates with a fixed, minimum C field and provides an output frequency that can easily be multiplied to the resonant frequency of the particular AFS being utilized. It contains no frequency synthesizers or extra feedback loops and no frequency adjustments. The nominal output frequency of

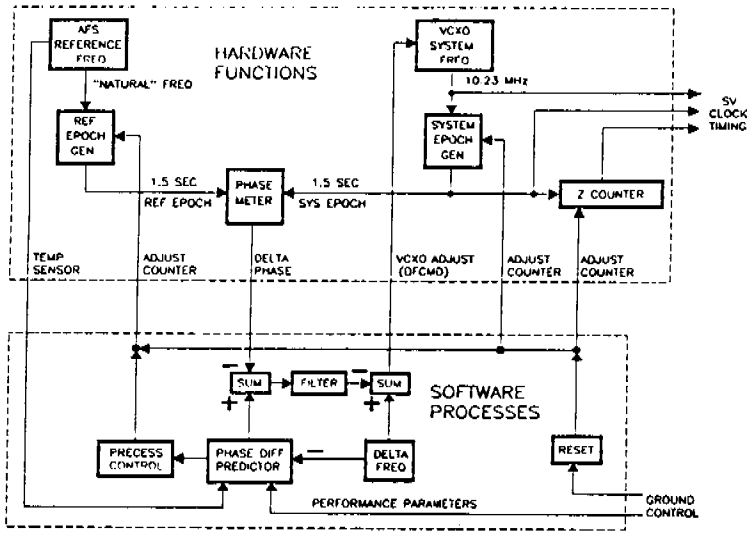

FIGURE 1 TSA ARCHITECTURE

the AFS is not critical; in this implementation it is 13.4 MHz. A stable VCXO is used as an system frequency source. Its nominal frequency is 10.23 MHz (GPS frequency) adjustable in 1 micro Hz steps over a range of 10 Hz to accommodate aging and selective availability (SA). The AFS and VCXO outputs are divided to obtain 1.5 second "epochs". These epochs are compared in a phase meter and the measured phase difference between the AFS and the VCXO epochs is compared to the predicted phase difference generated by a software phase difference predictor. The result of the comparison is a loop error signal that represents the difference in phase between the VCXO and the AFS. The loop error signal is converted by the processor to a VCXO control voltage (DFCMD) which is applied to the VCXO (after compensation for VCXO non linearity) to remove the phase difference. The loop filter smooths the phase meter output (a running average) and provides a software controlled, loop time constant. The loop time constant is normally quite long but switches to a short time constant when fast frequency corrections are required. DFCMD is generated every 1.5 seconds. The frequency of the VCXO can also be dithered by adjusting the DFCMD and compensating the output of the phase difference predictor.

The phase difference predictor uses AFS and VCXO performance algorithms stored in the processor to adjust the phase difference prediction to take into account the actual frequency of the AFS, its frequency drift (in the case of a rubidium AFS), its temperature sensitivity, relativistic and gravitational effects, and the non–linear response of the VCXO to control voltages. Since the AFS is asynchronous to GPS time, the phase difference predictor also keeps track of the precession between the epochs generated from the AFS frequency and the epochs generated from GPS time. Since the divider in the reference epoch generator only divides by whole numbers, keeping track of precession is a book keeping process until it reaches a value close to the value of the AFS period. When this value is reached, the divider in the reference epoch generator is adjusted by a whole count. The non linear response of the VCXO to control voltage changes and DAC non–linearity are taken into account when the DFCMD is generated. The VCXO characterization ensures that VCXO tuning is at the center of the tuning range of the DAC so that there is sufficient range to take care of VCXO aging and SA. The Z counter indicates real time by counting the reference epochs.

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS UPON TSA ARCHITECTURE

Performance specifications impose various design constraints upon the architecture. The requirement that the TSA be capable of operating for 6 months without ground assistance has the most severe impact on the design. It requires that the performance of the AFS (and to some extent the VCXO) be predictable to close tolerances for 6 months. In order to meet this requirement the AFS performance must be modeled prior to launch and the model stored in processor memory for use during orbital operation. It must also be possible to update these characteristics as a result of ground measurements. The impact of other specifications are, for the most part, minimal. Radiation and prompt dose specifications require the use of tantalum shielding and CMOS SOS technology for selected circuits and require that the AFS output use tuned circuits to "flywheel" through nuclear upsets. Specially designed circuits are also required to convert from the analog to the digital domain. The most significant constraints are listed below.

- Ensure TSA operation for 6 months without ground assistance.
- Ensure that there can be no undetected failure.
- Operate through single event (random) upsets.

- Make TSA radiation and nuclear event resistant.
- Provide for ground control override of all autonomous actions.
- Provide dual redundancy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TSA ARCHITECTURE

The TSA system design is illustrated by the hardware diagram of Figure 2. Dual redundancy is used throughout for reliability reasons except that three AFS are used; two rubidium (RAFS) and one cesium (CAFS). It is intended that two rubidium standards be powered up at all times. One standard will be on–line and the other will be a hot standby. Failure of the on–line standard (reference frequency source) will result in an automatic switchover to the hot standby. Switchover is accomplished without effecting the navigation mission of the SV because the high stability VCXO will "free run" during switchover and the hot AFS will be synchronized to the VCXO before it takes over as the reference frequency source. Monitor circuits ensure that AFS failure can be detected prior to significant performance degradation. The CAFS will be on cold standby for redundancy reasons but can also be used as a hot standby. Recovery from failure of other components requires ground help. The

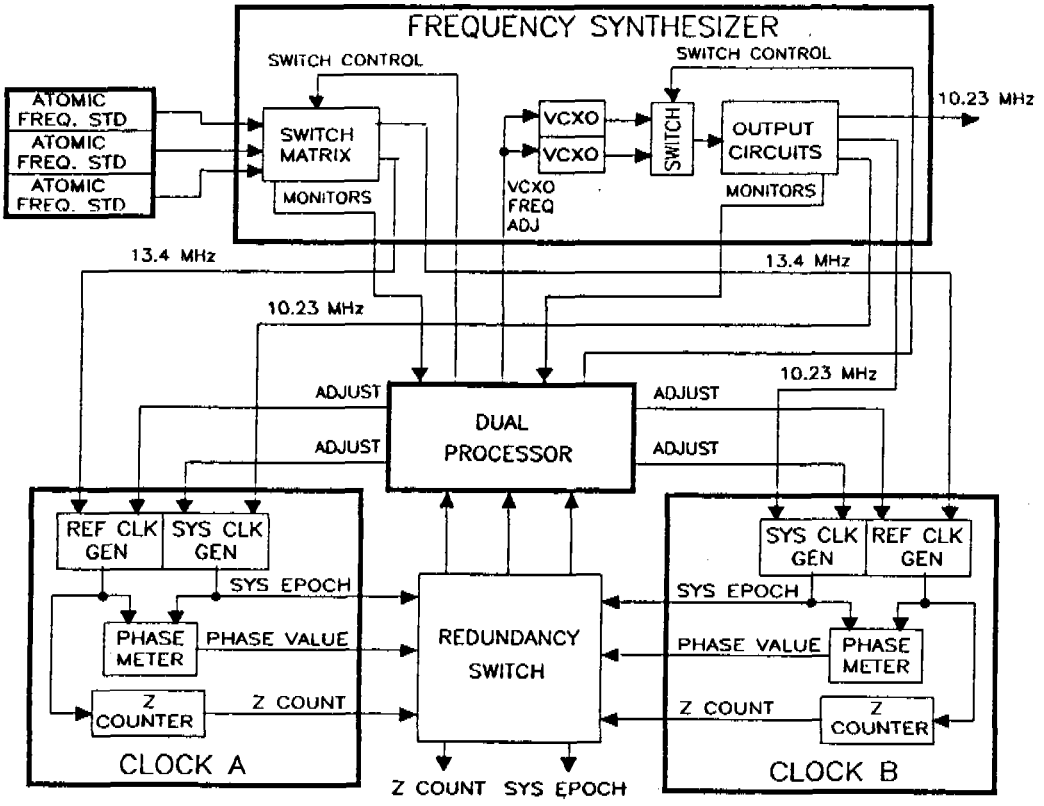

FIGURE 2 TSA SYSTEM BLOCK DIAGRAM

SV epoch generator hardware divides the outputs of the reference and system frequency sources to obtain reference and system clocks (1.5 second epochs). The dividers are programmable and resetable for initialization and adjustment purposes. A phase meter measures the phase difference between the system epoch and the reference epoch and outputs a digital value which represents coarse (¿ one AFS period) and fine phase difference between them. The measured phase is compared to the phase predicted by software and the difference is converted by the DFCMD generator to a frequency control signal that is applied to the VCXO which adjusts the VCXO frequency to remove the phase difference. The Z counter keeps track of real time by counting the reference epochs. Software provides adjustments to the epoch generators for initialization and clock correction and hardware monitors provide inputs to software diagnostics so that no undetected failures can occur.

The TSA software design is illustrated in Figure 3. The software predicts the phase difference between the reference and system clocks at each epoch using AFS performance models and AFS frequency data stored in the processor. In this implementation it must take into account the actual AFS frequency, AFS frequency drift, and AFS temperature. It reads the measured phase and compares it to the predicted phase. Phase error is converted to VCXO frequency control words (DFCMD) that are applied to the DAC in the VCXO which causes the VCXO to change frequency and thus remove the phase error. The DFCMD value is adjusted in accordance with a model stored in the processor to remove non linearities in the transfer function between the DFCMD and the output frequency change of the VCXO. The DFCMD is also adjusted to produce VCXO output frequencies in accordance with an SA algorithm that is related to the Z count. The software also maintains a software Z count to ensure that the hardware Z count is correct. AFS performance models and other performance

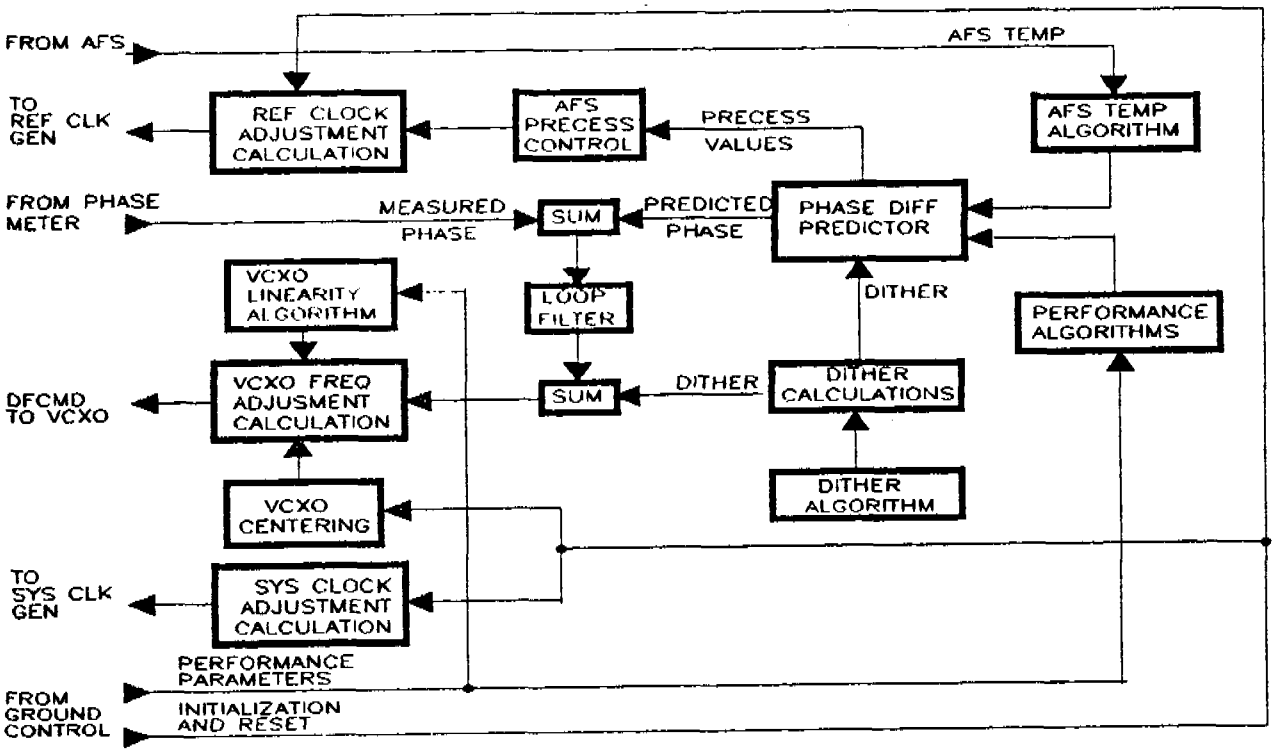

FIGURE 3 SOFTWARE BLOCK DIAGRAM

data are calculated prior to launch from careful measurements of the performance of the AFS and VCXO. These models and data are uploaded with other SV software during initialization. The models

and data are updated as required during orbital operations based upon ground measurements of in-orbit performance. The models and data parameters remain valid for more than 6 months although corrections may be provided to the user (in the user message) as a result of inter satellite measurements (cross link measurements).

TSA SYSTEM INTEGRITY

Numerous hardware monitors provide information to the processor so that there is no possibility that a single failure of a TSA component can go undetected. Improper monitor reading cause a fault alarm to be issued. Figure 4 illustrates the hardware monitoring arrangement. The following hardware monitors are provided:

- AFS activity detector. Detects AFS output.
- VCXO activity detector. Detects VCXO output.
- AFS lock status. Detects if AFS loop is locked.
- Reference and system epochs.
- Second harmonic level. Detects level of AFS modulating signal.
- Z counter. Value of Z count
- Phase meter (S/W looks for phase jumps and erroneous precession).
- Nuclear event detector.
- AFS temperature. Measures AFS baseplate temperature
- Cross link measurements

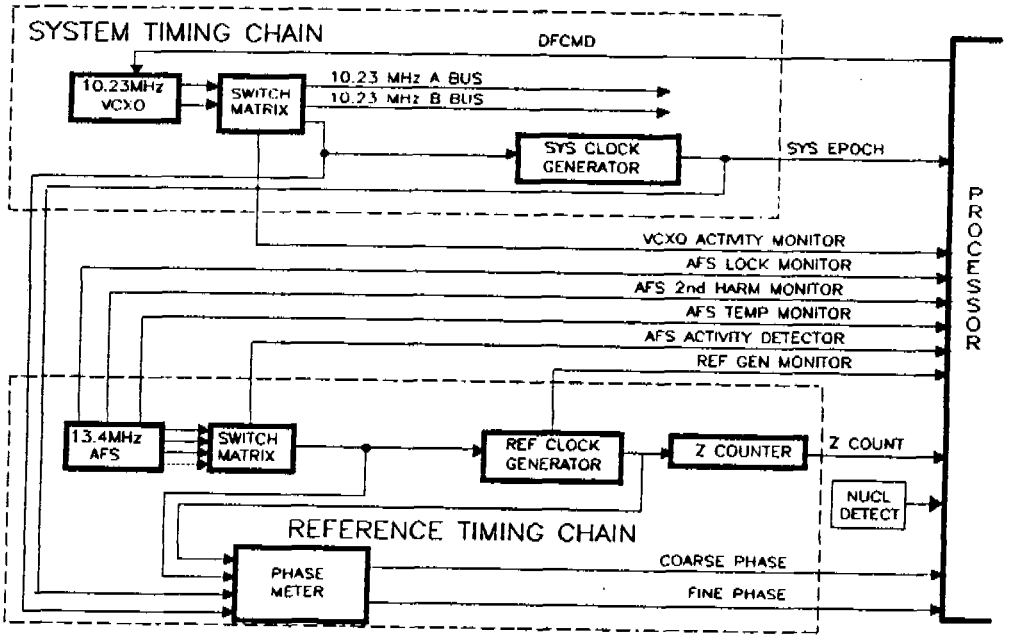

FIGURE 4 TSA INTEGRITY MONITORING

The first four of the above monitors are go, no–go detectors which indicate failures of the AFS, VCXO, and system and reference clocks directly. In the case of the system and reference epochs, software also maintains a watchdog timer. If the epochs do not occur within a specified period of time, an alarm is issued regardless of the status of the hardware monitors. The second harmonic detector will also indicate AFS failure; in addition, it will often provide an early warning of AFS failure conditions. If the level changes 20% with respect to a running average (calculated by software), experience has shown that it is probable that something is going wrong with the AFS even if its output remains unaffected. The value of previous Z counts is stored by software. At each epoch one is added to the previous Z count and the result is compared to the current Z count. Mismatches not accompanied by other alarms indicate that a logic upset has occurred.

The phase measurements are the most indicative of the health of the TSA. Phase values can indicate catastrophic failure, logic upsets, and health that is slowly deteriorating. A single, fixed phase jump that continues for more than on or two epochs is an indication that a logic upset has occurred. Erratic and continuous phase errors indicate a component failure. Phase values that indicate a precession that is different from the expected precession are indicative of AFS frequency changes. This can be detected before system performance is affected. Phase changes are likely to be the first indication that there is a problem and thus ensure that action can be taken within one or two epochs.

The nuclear event detector and AFS temperature monitor are not strictly TSA integrity monitors. The nuclear event detector confirms the cause of upset and therefore is useful in determining recovery actions. The temperature monitor is used by the phase predictor when it is calculating expected phase since the frequency of the AFS varies slightly with temperature. However, out of range, non cyclic, or erratic temperature changes indicate something is wrong with the AFS. Cross link measurements between insight Block 2R satellites also provides an important integrity check. They are made hourly and will indicate slow or fast time changes that have not been predicted.

System integrity is software intensive. No hardware recovery or alarm action takes place directly. Software takes appropriate action on the basis of monitor inputs. The software also maintains the usual internal range checks and time outs to ensure that the software is operating correctly. Any fault alarm will cause the software to enter a diagnostic routine which determines what has failed and whether it is possible to recover autonomously without affecting performance. If it is possible to recover autonomously the TSA does so. If not an alarm is placed in the user message. A complete description of autonomous recovery is not covered in this paper, but, in general, if the failure is limited to the AFS, or if the upset is limited to either the system or reference timing autonomous recovery is possible.

PREDICTED TSA PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS

Engineering models and prototypes of the frequency standards and other TSA functions have been built and initial tests completed. Analysis of the test results leads me to believe that the following performance can be achieved.

- Short Term Frequency Stability: VCXO 1×10^{-12}; CAFS 3×10^{-11}; RAFS 3×10^{-12}
- Long Term Frequency Stability: CAFS 5×10^{-14}; RAFS $1 \times 1-^{-14}$
- TSA User Range Error (24 hour,1 Sigma): CAFS 2.6 m; RAFS 1.8 m

- Frequency Drift (RAFS): Removed by modeling
- Temperature Sensitivity: RAFS 1×10^{-13} change in freq per degree C
  (Decreased to 2.4×10^{-14} by modeling)
  CAFS Negligible
- AFS Reliability: Better than 0.75
- Power Consumption: CAFS 20 watts; RAFS 14 Watts
- Weight: CAFS 26 LBS; RAFS 12 LBS

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TSA DESIGN

The TSA is no exception to the rule that all designs can be improved. Possible future improvements to the TSA that can be made as a result of experience gained on this design range from minor enhancements to complete redesigns. The software intensive nature of the design presents possibilities for increased use of autonomous recovery and improved availability due to autonomous redundancy management. Minor changes (in the technical sense) to the hardware and software would permit autonomous recovery from many TSA hardware failures and all TSA hardware upsets. These changes are:

- Add a hot standby VCXO so that VCXO and AFS switchover is possible.
- Duplicate or time share the phase measurement circuitry.
- Provide software controlled management of hot standby VCXO.
- Add software diagnostic routines to locate upsets and failures.
- Add software performance analysis routines to characterize operation.
- Reduce the number of AFS from three to two.

The first three of the above changes increases availability by incorporating autonomous hardware redundancy management of the AFS and VCXO hardware. Duplicating or time sharing the phase measurement circuitry permits monitoring and assessing the performance of the AFS and VCXO hot standbys. The fourth change would increase availability by permitting autonomous recovery from TSA logic upsets. It provides for the effective use of the first three changes. The fifth change provides the means to model the performance of the TSA during operation thus improving the ability of the phase predictor to predict phase. The last change recognizes 17 years of improvements made in the reliability of atomic frequency standards and the improved availability as a result of autonomous AFS switching.

Another improvement would be to develop a nuclear upset proof digital frequency synthesizer. The original TSA system design incorporated a digital frequency synthesizer to generate the 10.23 MIlz and to provide SA. This approach was abandoned and a VCXO used in its place because an nuclear upset proof synthesizer was not available. It seems likely that technology has advanced to the point where such a synthesizer is now possible. Synthesizers permit a single AFS to drive both the reference and system clocks, further improving availability, and SA functions are simplified.

In the present design, many TSA functions are included as part of other functions. Hardware functions are located in the Mission Data Unit (MDU) and the TSA software is located in the mission processor. Also, the system epoch generator is part of the P code generator. The current hardware configuration evolved from previous GPS designs but is not the best way to ensure TSA performance and producibility and results in complex MDU hardware and mission processor software. The TSA should be configured into three functions; AFS, VCXO, and TSA logic. The TSA logic should include its own processor. Such a configuration would simplify the MDU and mission processor software, reduce VCXO redundancy by 2, permit separate testing of the MDU and TSA, and improve the producibility of both the TSA and the MDU.