Rohde & Schwarz products: R&S® AM300

Phase-Synchronized Signal Generation with two R&S® AM300

This application sheet describes how to use two or more Arbitrary-/Function Generators R&S® AM300 to generate multi-phase-synchronized signals, which are required in some applications.
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1 Overview

The R&S AM300 is a dual-channel arbitrary-/function signal generator. It offers powerful functionality and spectral purity at a favorable price. The two output channels of the instrument are phase-coupled, thus it can generate two signals with precisely defined time and phase relationship. However, some applications require more than two signals with a defined phase relationship. This can be implemented by connecting several AM300 together as the AM300 provides output connectors for both, the reference signal and the synchronization signal at the rear of the instrument. This application sheet describes the set-up and configuration of two AM300.

2 Hardware Setup

Figure 1 shows the cable connection of two AM300. The first AM300 is used as the reference and synchronization source. Connect the ‘10MHz Out’ port of the first AM300 with the ‘10MHz In’ port of the second AM300 and connect the ‘Sync. A Out’ port of the first AM300 with the ‘Trig/Gate In’ port of the second AM300.

Two AM300 can generate up to four signals. If more than four signals are needed, a third or more AM300 are required. They should be connected in the same way as the second AM300.
3 Instrument Configuration

Overview
The instrument configuration is done in three main steps:

1. One generator AM300 has to be configured to act as a reference and synchronization source (‘first AM300’).
2. The other AM300 has to be configured for an external reference and trigger signal (‘second AM300’).
3. Finally the signal set-up for channel 1 and 2 of both AM300 has to be programmed, and a phase adjustment between the signals, generated by the first AM300 and the second AM300, needs to be carried out.

Step 3 requires an Oscilloscope to measure the phase difference between the first and second generator. This oscilloscope can also be used to verify the final signals on all four channels after phase adjustment.

Reference and Synchronization Source
After the hardware set-up of both AM300, the first AM300 needs to be configured as synchronization source. Two internal synchronisation signals can be selected:
- Comparator
- Main accumulator.

Comparator
The synchronization signal is generated by analog comparators. The switching threshold is fixed at the zero crossing. The comparator signals deliver relatively jitter-free output signals across the whole frequency range.

Main accumulator
At low frequencies it might be advantageous to select the synchronisation signal generated from the most significant bit (MSB) of the main phase accumulator (‘Main accu’). As in the case of the comparators the switching threshold is at the zero crossing at 0° and 180°. Since the start phase is added on only after the phase accumulator there is a phase difference between the output signal and the synchronization signal.

Selection of the Synchronisation signal

1. In the menu press the function key.
2. In the submenu press the function key.
3. In the submenu press the function key.
4. A selection field, containing specified settings, is displayed.

![Sync Source]

The default setting is ‘Comparator’.

5. Either use the default setting or use the rotary knob to select ‘Main Accu’.
6. Press the ENTER key to close the selection field.
Phase delay

When the second AM300 signal is triggered, there will be a delay of the activation time. Thus the two different kinds of synchronization sources will cause different phase delays due to the different delay time of the trigger signal in relation to the function signal. Figure 2 to Figure 5 show the CH1 output synchronization signal with the two different synchronization sources versus the CH1 output sine wave at two different frequencies.

The pink color waveform is the synchronization signal, while the yellow one is the CH1 signal. With ‘Main Accu’ as synchronization source the trigger is always ahead of the CH1 signal, while with ‘Comparator’ the trigger is always lagged. Using ‘Main Accu’ the phase shift increase with increasing signal frequency is larger than using ‘Comparator’. As the frequency increases, the jitter of the triggered signal also will increase. In both cases the phase shift needs to be compensated with the phase setting of the triggered signal.

Figure 2: CH1 Sync. Source ‘Comparator’ vs CH1 signal at 1MHz (Δφ = 5.29°)

Figure 3: CH1 Sync. Source ‘Main Accu’ vs. CH1 signal at 1 MHz (Δφ = 51.33°)
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Figure 4: CH1 Sync. Source ‘Comparator’ vs. CH1 signal at 10KHz ($\Delta\varphi = 1.15^\circ$)

Figure 5: CH1 Sync. Source ‘Main Accu’ vs. CH1 signal at 10 KHz ($\Delta\varphi = -1.84^\circ$)

The trigger function of the AM300 is provided to trigger a frequency sweep. The Gate/Burst function is used to trigger a waveform. Thus the Gate/Burst function needs to be activated in order to trigger the second AM300 continuously. The steps to configure this function are shown below.

1. Select TRIG/GATE menu with the $<$ or $>$ cursor key.

2. In the TRIG/GATE submenu press the Gate/Burst function key.

3. In the Gate/Burst submenu press the Gate function key to select the gate function. Choose Block End.

4. Press the Gate function key to set the gate length to 9999 seconds, as we want to have a constant output signal. If an application requires a continuous output signal with duration of more than 2.8 hours (9999 s), another solution needs to be sought out.
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External Reference and Trigger Signal
Now the second AM300 needs to be configured to use the external reference signal coming from the first AM300:

1. Press the SYS key. Preset the AM300 by pressing the PRESET key.
2. Select the CONFIG menu with the < or > cursor key. The menu name is highlighted and the appropriate functions are assigned to the function keys.
3. Press the REF function key in the menu. The current reference source setting is displayed.

Then the second AM300 has to be programmed to be externally triggered by the first AM300. Activate the GATE function:

1. Select the TRIG/GATE menu with the < or > cursor key.
2. In the TRIG/GATE submenu press the GATE/Extern function key.
3. In the GATE/Extern submenu press the GATE FUNCTION function key to select the gate function. Choose Block End.
4. Press Enter. Thus the signal output will be triggered only by external trigger.

After these configurations both AM300 are ready to output phase-synchronized signals by configuring the CH1 and CH2 menu.

Signal Set-up and Phase Adjustment
As an example four sine wave signals with different phase at 0°, 90°, 180° and 270° respectively shall be generated. CH1 and CH2 of the first AM300 will be configured to output the signals with phase 0° and 90°, while CH1 and CH2 of the second AM300 will be configured to output the signals with phase 180° and 270°.

After connecting and configuring both AM300 as described above the remaining steps are given in the following description.

Settings for the first AM300:
1. Press CH1 Menu.
2. Press the FREQ key to configure the frequency.
3. Press the AMP key and in the submenu; press Vpp to configure the signal peak to peak value.
4. Press the WAVEFORM key to choose SINE.
5. Activate CH1 by pressing the CH1 ON key. Once it is on, the color of the key will be blue.
6. Press CH2 Menu.
7. Repeat step 2 to 4 in CH2 submenu.
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8. Press the **START PHASE** key, and in the submenu press the key and key in the 90°.

9. Activate CH2 by pressing the **CH2 ON** key

**Settings for the second AM300:**

1. Press **CH1 Menu**.

2. Press the **FREQ** key to configure the frequency.

3. Press the **Vpp** key, and in the submenu press **Vpp** to configure the signal peak to peak value.

4. Press the **WAVEFORM** key to choose **SINE**.

5. Activate CH1 by pressing the **CH1 ON** key. Once it is on, the color of the key will be blue.

**Phase adjustment**

After doing these configurations we need to do a phase adjustment caused by the phase shift of the synchronization signal and the triggering time of the second AM300. This can be done by using an oscilloscope. An example is shown in Figure 6. The signal frequency is 1 MHz. The yellow waveform is the CH1 signal of the first AM300, while the pink waveform is the CH1 signal of the second AM300. The measured mean value $\Delta \varphi_{\text{mean}}$ of the phase difference between both signals is 8.6°; the jitter of the phase shift is around 2°.

![Phase shift of the two signals at f = 1MHz ($\Delta \varphi_{\text{mean}}$=8.6°).](image-url)

6. Press the **START PHASE** key, and in the submenu press the **START PHASE** key. The phase should be $-180^\circ + \Delta \varphi_{\text{mean}}$ (the input range of the phase is $-180^\circ$ to $180^\circ$).

7. Press **CH2 Menu**.

8. Repeat step 2 to 4 in **CH2 submenu**.
9. Press the \texttt{PARAM} key, and in the submenu press the \texttt{START PHASE} key. The phase should be \(-90^\circ + \Delta \phi_{\text{mean}}\).

10. Activate CH2 by pressing \texttt{CH2 ON} key. Using the oscilloscope you can then see all four waveforms.

The phase compensation is fixed at the particular frequency. So, you don’t have to measure the phase delay all the time.

4 Summary

Using more than one AM300 multi phase synchronized signals can be generated. This application sheet demonstrates how to do the setup and how to compensate the phase shift due to the delay of the synchronization signal and the triggering time.

For comments and suggestions please contact customersupport.asia@rohde-schwarz.com.

5 Ordering Information

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<th>Type of instrument</th>
<th>Dual Channel Arbitrary / Function generator</th>
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