

PSoC® 1 Measuring Frequency

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Associated Project: Yes

Associated Part Family: All PSoC® 1 Families except CY8C20xxx family

Software Version: PSoC Designer 5.4

Related Application Notes: [AN2099](#)

If you have a question, or need help with this application note, contact the author at msur@cypress.com

Many applications require measuring a frequency. Several methods exist to do this, each having particular advantages. A brief review of two commonly used methods is discussed and a hybrid method is introduced. A sample project is presented enabling measurement of frequencies with a typical error of 0.0016% (16 ppm).

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Introduction

Measuring a signal's frequency is a common mixed-signal application. It may be the tachometer signal from a motor or an analog signal for tone detection. For all cases, it requires determining the rate of the signal's oscillation. For mechanical systems, this rate is generally known as "revolutions per minute" (rpm). For electrical systems, it is better known as "cycles per second" or Hertz.

There are two classic methods for measuring frequency:

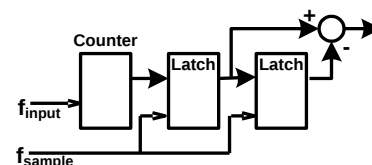
- Measure the number of cycles in a fixed period of time
- Measure the time of one cycle

Each method has advantages and limitations of range and accuracy. They are described as follows.

Counting Cycles for a Fixed Time

Figure 1 shows the topology for counting the number of cycles in a fixed period.

Figure 1. Counting Cycles for a Fixed Time



The counter's value is latched at sample rate f_{sample} and incremented every cycle of the input signal f_{input} . The double latches enable the old count value to be subtracted

from the new, resulting in the new accumulated value for each sample period.

This method of measuring the frequency has the advantage that the answer outputs at the constant sample rate f_{sample} . Equation 1 gives the accumulated value for the given input and the sample frequencies.

$$AccumulatedValue = \frac{f_{input}}{f_{sample}} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

By definition, the accumulated value must be an integer value, while it is most likely the ratio the two frequencies are not. For such cases, the accumulated value will differ by 1 count and the average of many accumulated values equals the said ratio. Suppose a 12.3 Hz input signal is to be accumulated at a rate of 1 sample per second (sps). The accumulated value is:

- 12, 70% of the time
- 13, 30% of the time

If the sample frequency is increased to 10 sps, the accumulated value is:

- 1, 67% of the time
- 2, 23% of the time

Equation 1 is refined to include this quantization error (e_q) and becomes Equation 2.

$$AccumulatedValue = \frac{f_{input}}{f_{sample}} + e_q \quad \{ |e_q| < 1 \} \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

Equation 3 shows how the measured frequency is calculated.

$$f_{measured} = AccumulatedValue \cdot f_{sample} \quad \text{Equation 3}$$

Inserting the accumulated value defined in Equation 2 into Equation 3, results in Equation 4.

$$f_{measured} = f_{input} + e_q \cdot f_{sample} \quad \text{Equation 4}$$

For an input frequency of 12.3 Hz and a sample rate of 1 sps, the measured frequency is:

- 12 Hz, 70% of the time
- 13 Hz, 30% of the time

And if the sample frequency is increased to 10 sps, the accumulated value is:

- 10 Hz, 67% of the time
- 20 Hz, 23% of the time

The worst-case error for a 1 sps rate is about 1 Hz and for a 10 sps rate, it is about 10 Hz. Now a 1 Hz error is not bad for measuring a large frequency of, 141,421 Hz. The error works out to 7 parts per million (ppm). However, for a small frequency, let us say 14 Hz, it is not good.

Equation 5 defines the relative error for a given sample rate and the input frequency.

$$error_{rel} = \frac{|f_{measured} - f_{input}|}{f_{input}} = |e_q| \cdot \frac{f_{sample}}{f_{input}} < \frac{f_{sample}}{f_{input}}$$

Equation 5

Clearly, the higher the input frequency, relative to the sample rate, the smaller the error. To guarantee an error less than 0.1%, the signal frequency must be at least 1000 times the sample rate. For a sample rate of 1 Hz, this works out to a minimum input frequency of 1 kHz.

The upper limit of a measurable input frequency is determined by the size of the counter.

Equation 6 defines the maximum frequency boundary as a function of the sample rate and the counter size in bits.

$$f_{input} < f_{sample} \cdot 2^n \quad \text{Equation 6}$$

Trying to measure a frequency higher than this causes the counter to overflow.

Table 1 summarizes this method of measuring the frequency. It works best for measuring higher frequencies and produces answers at a steady predictable rate.

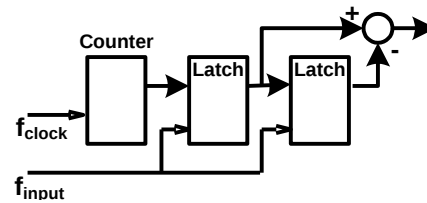
Table 1. Method of Measuring (Higher) Frequencies

Sample Rate	f_{sample}
Minimum f_{input}	0 Hz
Maximum f_{input}	$f_{sample} \cdot 2^n - 1$
Relative Error	$< f_{sample}/f_{input}$

Measuring Time for a Single Cycle

Figure 2 shows the topology for measuring the time of a single input cycle.

Figure 2. Measuring Time for a Single Cycle



The counter is continuously incremented by a clock frequency f_{clock} and latched by the input signal f_{input} . The double latches enable the old count value to be subtracted from the new count value, resulting in the new accumulated value for each sample period.

This method has the advantage of updating at the rate of the input frequency f_{input} . Equation 7 gives the accumulated value for the given input and the sample frequencies.

$$AccumulatedValue = \frac{f_{clock}}{f_{input}} + e_q \quad \text{Equation 7}$$

Note that an error term has been added to account for the quantization. Suppose a 3 kHz input signal is clocked at 1 MHz. Using Equation 7 and neglecting the error term, the accumulated value is 333.33. The actual accumulated count is:

- 333, two thirds of the time
- 334, one third of the time

Equation 8 shows how the measured frequency is calculated.

$$f_{measured} = \frac{f_{clock}}{AccumulatedValue} \quad \text{Equation 8}$$

Given the same input and the clock as previously mentioned, the measured frequency is:

- 3.003 kHz, two thirds of the time
- 2.994 kHz, one third of the time

Inserting the accumulated value defined in Equation 7 into Equation 8, results in Equation 9.

$$f_{measured} = \frac{f_{clock}}{\left(\frac{f_{clock}}{f_{input}} + e_q\right)} \approx f_{input} \left(1 - e_q \cdot \frac{f_{input}}{f_{clock}}\right) \quad \text{Equation 9}$$

Equation 10 defines the relative error for given clock and input frequencies.

$$error_{rel} = \frac{|f_{measured} - f_{input}|}{f_{input}} = e_q \cdot \frac{f_{input}}{f_{clock}} < \frac{f_{input}}{f_{clock}} \quad \text{Equation 10}$$

To guarantee an error less than 0.1%, the clock frequency must be at least 1000 times that of the input. For a 24 MHz clock, this works out to a maximum input frequency of 24 kHz.

The lower limit of a measurable input frequency is determined by the size of the counter. Equation 11 defines the minimum input frequency boundary as a function of the clock rate and the counter size in bits.

$$f_{input} < \frac{f_{clock}}{2^n - 1} \quad \text{Equation 11}$$

Trying to measure a frequency less than this causes the counter to overflow.

Table 2 summarizes this method of measuring frequency. It works best for measuring lower frequencies.

Table 2. Method of Measuring (Lower) Frequencies

Sample Rate	f_{input}
Minimum f_{signal}	$f_{clock}/(2^n - 1)$
Maximum f_{signal}	f_{clock}
Relative Error	$< f_{input}/f_{clock}$

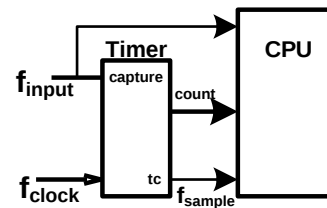
A Hybrid Method

Both methods for measuring the frequency have their particular advantages. Counting cycles is best suited for measuring higher frequencies while measuring a cycle's period is better for measuring lower frequencies. Both have the limitation that for any amount of decent resolution (small relative error), the input frequency range for any particular clock or sample frequencies is limited.

One traditional solution is to have different ranges. That is, several selectable clocks or sample frequencies. This requires intelligence to determine when it is best to change range or measurement method.

A hybrid method could be used to measure the width of as many cycles that fit in a specified sample period. Figure 3 shows the topology for making such a measurement.

Figure 3. Measuring Time of Many Cycles



The timer is an n bits down counter that decrements each clock cycle f_{clock} . A terminal count is generated when the counter underflows. This signal f_{sample} defines the sample period. It is a function of the clock frequency and counter size. The CPU uses this signal to synchronize the first and the last cycle capture. The input f_{input} is connected to the timer capture input. A rising edge on the capture causes the counter value to be latched and be accessible to the CPU. The input signal is connected to the CPU. This enables it to be counted.

Again, this method requires measuring the time of as many input cycles that fit within the sample period. Equation 12 defines the sample frequency as a function of the sample rate and the counter size in bits.

$$f_{sample} = \frac{f_{clock}}{2^n} \quad \text{Equation 12}$$

For a clock frequency of 100 kHz and a 16-bit timer, the sample rate is 1.52588 sps.

The number of input cycles detected in a sample period is a function of that sample frequency and the input frequency. It is defined in Equation 13.

$$CycleCount = \frac{f_{input}}{f_{sample}} + e_{q1} \quad \text{Equation 13}$$

Given an input signal with a frequency of 15 kHz and neglecting the quantization error, the cycle count is 9830.4. The actual cycle count is:

- 9830 60% of the time
- 9831 40% of the time

The actual cycle count fluctuates. Note that a cycle count of “c” gives “c-1” cycles to be measured. The accumulated timer value is a function of the data clock, the input frequency, and the cycle count value. It is defined in Equation 14.

$$AccumulatedValue = \frac{f_{clock}}{f_{input} / CycleCount - 1} + e_{q2} \quad \text{Equation 14}$$

Given the same parameters and neglecting the new quantization error, the accumulated value is:

- 65526.67 when the cycle count is 9830
- 65533.33 when the cycle count is 9831

Equation 15 defines how the measured frequency is calculated. It is a function of the data clock, the number of cycles measured, and the accumulated count for those cycles.

$$f_{measured} = \frac{f_{clock} \cdot (CycleCount - 1)}{AccumulatedValue} \quad \text{Equation 15}$$

Again, given the same parameters, Table 3 gives the measured frequency for all four permutations of the cycle count and the accumulated value.

Table 3. Frequency for All Four Permutations

F _{measured} (kHz)	Cycle Count	Accumulated Value
15.00015	9830	65526
14.99992	9830	65527
15.00008	9831	65533
14.99985	9831	65534

For all four possibilities, the worst-case error is 0.15 Hz for a relative error of 10 ppm.

The relative error for this method of frequency measurement is difficult to precisely calculate, but it is roughly determined by the accumulated value and defined in Equation 16.

$$error_{rel} = \frac{|f_{measured} - f_{input}|}{f_{input}} < \frac{1}{AccumulatedValue}$$

Equation 16

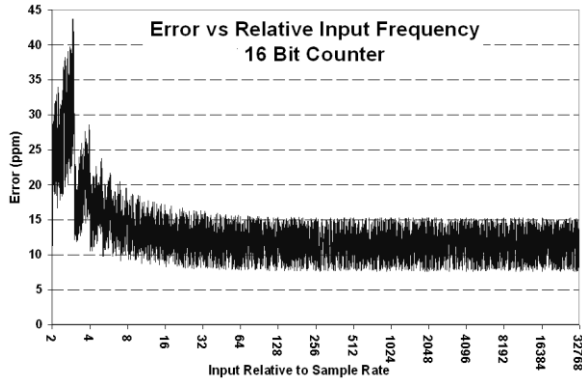
The worst-case error results from the input signal, which causes the smallest accumulation. For an input signal not three times the sample rate, the cycle count is less than three. It fluctuates between the values of two and three, resulting in one or two cycles being measured. For the case of one cycle, the accumulation value is roughly 1/3 to total range of the counter. Equation 17 roughly defines the worst-case error given the sample rate counter size in bits and the ratio of the input frequency to the sample rate.

$$error_{rel} = \frac{\left(\frac{ratio}{ratio - 2} \right)}{2^n} ; ratio \geq 3 \quad \text{Equation 17}$$

The error is the worst of the ratio of 3. For a 16-bit timer, it is 3 parts in 65536 or 46 ppm. As the ratio increases, the error drastically decreases to a limit of 1 part in 65536 counts or 15 ppm.

A simulation of the error versus the input frequency sample rate ratio for a 16-bit timer is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Relative Error for 16-Bit Timer



Note that the error reaches a peak at a signal three times the sample rate and is relatively flat for values larger than sixteen times the sample rate.

Table 4 gives the worst-case error and limit error for three different sized timers.

Table 4. Worst and Limit Relative Error

Timer Size (Bits)	Worst-Case Error	Limit Error
8	1,2%	0.4%
16	46 ppm	15 ppm
24	0.18 ppm	0.06 ppm

The minimum frequency that can be consistently measured is twice the sample rate. Any value less than that cannot guarantee that two cycles are detected. The maximum frequency will be the clock frequency.

The range is the ratio of maximum and minimum values and is defined in Equation 18.

$$range = \frac{\max(f_{input})}{\min(f_{input})} = \frac{f_{clock}}{2 \cdot f_{sample}} = \frac{2^n \cdot f_{sample}}{2 \cdot f_{sample}} = 2^{n-1}$$

Equation 18

Table 5 summarizes the hybrid method of measuring the frequency. It works well over a wide range of frequencies and produces answers at a steady predictable rate.

Table 5. Hybrid Method of Measuring the Frequency

Sample Rate	$f_{clock}/2^n$
Minimum f_{signal}	$f_{clock}/2^{n-1}$
Maximum f_{signal}	f_{clock}
Range	2^{n-1}
Relative Error	$< 3/2^n$ down to $1/2^n$

Selecting Parameters

The five parameters shown in Table 5 are derived from only two variables.

- Clock Frequency
- Timer Size

Each application will place more weight to one or more of the parameters. This will drive the selection of the two variables.

Suppose an application requires you to control the speed of a four-pole fan with the following requirements:

- Must measure speed from 1000 to 8000 rpm
- Accuracy is better than 50 rpm
- Sample rate must be exactly 10 sps

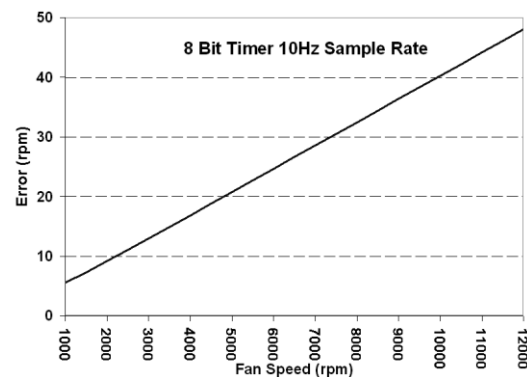
The third condition requires $f_{sample} = 10$ sps.

A four-pole fan with a range of 1000 to 8000 rpm generates pulses at a rate of 66.66 Hz to 533.33 Hz. A sample frequency of 10 sps determines the minimum input frequency to be 20 Hz. This is well below the required 66.66 Hz lower limit.

The required range is only 8, so it appears that an 8-bit timer may be acceptable. This sets the requirement for the clock frequency of $f_{clock} = 2.56$ kHz. It also sets the upper measurement limit to 2.56 kHz. This is well above the requirement of 543.33 Hz.

This only leaves the accuracy requirement. Using Equation 17, the relative error is determined. Multiplying it by the input frequency produces the actual error. A plot of error versus the input frequency is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Error Versus the Input Frequency



For the range of 1000 to 8000 rpm, the error is well below the 50-rpm limit. An 8-bit timer is acceptable for this particular application. The two parameters are:

- $f_{clock} = 2.56$ kHz
- $n = 8$ (8-Bit Timer)

A PSoC Implementation

This example uses a general-purpose, 16-bit timer with a sample rate of 1 sps. It is implemented in a CY8C29466-24XI (28-pin DIP CY8C29xxx family part). This PSoC® device was selected because it is included in the CY3210-PSoCEval1. This project can easily be cloned to any of the PSoC device families. The blocks required to implement the topology shown in Figure 3 are:

- A comparator to condition the input signal and give an “acquire” interrupt
- A 16-bit timer with an interrupt on terminal count
- An LCD
- Software for the controller

Example Hardware

The placement and parameter selection for each block of hardware is described as follows.

Comparator User Module

The comparator is implemented with the Programmable Threshold Comparator User Module. Its placement and parameter selections are shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7.

Figure 6. User Module Placement of the Comparator

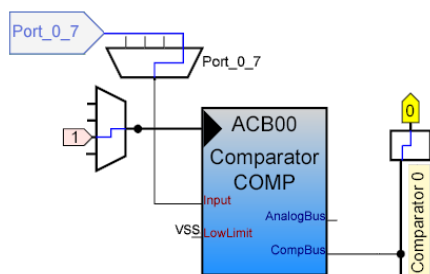


Figure 7. User Module Parameters for the Comparator

User Module Parameters	Value
AnalogBus	Disable
CompBus	ComparatorBus_0
Input	AnalogColumn_InputMUX_0
LowLimit	VSS
RefValue	0.500

Port 0[7] is selected as the input. The threshold is set for 50% of the supply voltage but can easily be changed to some other threshold voltage. The comparator output is connected to the Comparator Bus 0 where it is available to the digital blocks, the CPU, and the interrupt server.

Timer User Module

The timer is implemented with a Timer16 User Module. Its placement and parameter selections are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

Figure 8. User Module Placement of the Timer

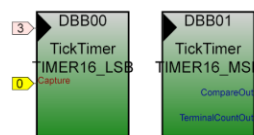


Figure 9. User Module Parameters for the Timer

User Module Parameters	Value
Clock	VC3
Capture	ComparatorBus_0
TerminalCountOut	None
CompareOut	None
Period	65535
CompareValue	0
CompareType	Less Than
InterruptType	Terminal Count
ClockSync	Sync to SysCik
TC_PulseWidth	Full Clock
InterruptAPI	Enable
IntDispatchMode	ActiveStatus
InvertCapture	Normal

The timer is set up as a 16-bit timer that generates an interrupt every 2^{16} clocks. The clock is connected to VC3, which is set up to be 24 MHz/368 for the clock frequency of 65.21739 kHz. The sample rate is this clock frequency divided by the period value or 0.995 sps. The capture input connects to the comparator so that the timer value is latched and available to the CPU.

LCD

The LCD User Module is set to use port 2.

Sample Signal Source

The Counter24 User Module is added to generate a sample frequency. Its placement and parameter selections are shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11.

Figure 10. User Module Placement of the Counter

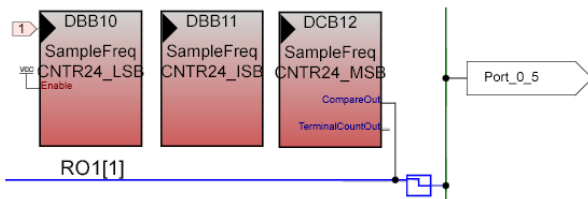


Figure 11. User Module Parameters for the Sample Frequency Source (Counter)

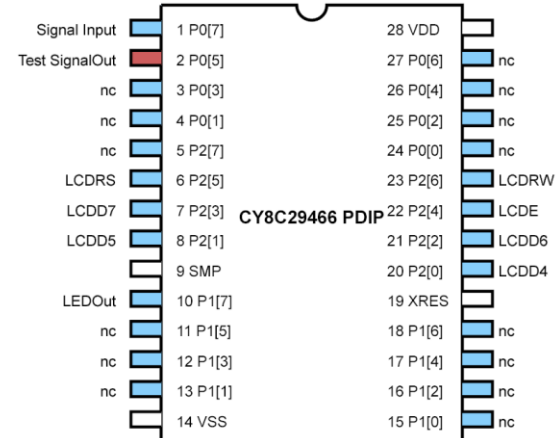
SampleFreq	
User Module Parameters	Value
Clock	VC1
Enable	High
CompareOut	Row_1_Output_1
TerminalCountOut	None
Period	9719
CompareValue	4860
CompareType	Less Than
InterruptType	Terminal Count
ClockSync	Sync to SysClk
InterruptAPI	Disable
IntDispatchMode	ActiveStatus
InvertEnable	Normal

VC1 is the clock for the counter and is set to 12 MHz. The present period setting results in an output frequency to 1.2346 kHz. The output is connected to Port 0[5]. Changing the period and compare values enables the sample frequency to be adjusted from 6 MHz to 0.72 Hz.

Other Considerations

Port 1[7] is connected to an LED to blink at the sample rate. The pin-out for this example is shown in [Figure 12](#).

Figure 12. Example Project Pin-Out



Example Software

Calculating the frequency requires:

- Saving the first captured timer value in a timer period
- Saving the last captured timer value in a timer period
- Saving the total number of cycles detected in a timer period
- Processing the measured frequency from these three values

Two 16-bit variables are required to hold the first and last captured timer values. They are:

- wFirstValue
- wLastValue

A 16-bit variable is required to count the number of cycles detected and an 8-bit variable to keep the overflow of this variable. They are:

- wTickCount
- cOverflow

They can be thought of as a single, 24-bit variable.

At the end of the timer period, the difference of the two timer values must be stored with a copy of the cycle count value. Because this process runs in the background, a semaphore must be set to declare that new data is available. These variables are:

- wSaveTickNum
- cSaveOverflow
- wSaveCountNum
- bDataAvailable

A total of eight variables using 13 bytes of RAM are required.

There are three parts to the software for measuring the frequency:

- Initialization
- Cycle Capture
- Processing at End of Timer Period

Initialization

The initialization function is shown in Code 1. It is called `StartFreq` and located in *freqcode.asm* of the project associated with this Application Note.

Code 1. Initialization Function

```
export _StartFreq
include "m8c.inc"
include "memory.inc"
include "PSoCAPI.inc"

_StartFreq:
    RAM_PROLOGUE RAM_USE_CLASS_4
    RAM_SETPAGE_CUR > _bDataReady
    mov [_cOverflow],ffh    ;TickCount =-1
    mov [_wTickCount + 0],ffh
    mov [_wTickCount + 1],ffh
    mov [_bDataAvailable],0    ;clear bDataReady
    and reg[INT_CLR1],~02h    ;clear timer int
    TickTimer_EnableInt_M     ;enable timer
    TickTimer_Start_M         ;start timer
    and reg[INT_CLR0],~02h    ;clear comp int
    or reg[INT_MSK0],02h     ;enable comp int
    RAM_EPILOGUE RAM_USE_CLASS_4
    ret
```

This routine initializes the cycle count variable. Note that it initializes to -1. This automatically subtracts 1 from the count value. The timer is started and both interrupts are enabled.

Cycle Capture

The cycle capture function is shown in Code 2. It is called `TickHandler_ISR` and located in *tickhandler.asm* of the project associated with this application.

Code 2. Cycle Capture Function

```
include "m8c.inc"
include "memory.inc"
include "TickTimer.inc"
```

```
export _TickHandler_ISR
_TickHandler_ISR:
    push A
    inc [_wTickCount + 1]
    adc [_wTickCount + 0],0
    adc [_cOverflow],0
    jnc LastTick

FirstTick:
    mov A, reg[TickTimer_COMPARE_LSB_REG]
    mov [_wFirstValue + 1],A
    mov A, reg[TickTimer_COMPARE_MSB_REG]
    mov [_wFirstValue + 0],A
    pop A
    reti

LastTick:
    mov A, reg[TickTimer_COMPARE_LSB_REG]
    mov [_wLastValue + 1],A
    mov A, reg[TickTimer_COMPARE_MSB_REG]
    mov [_wLastValue + 0],A
    pop A
    reti
```

The count value is incremented. If the counter rolls over to zero, then this must be the first cycle detected. The acquired timer value is stored in `wFirstTick`. For any other case, the timer value is loaded into `wLastTick`.

Processing at End of Timer Period

This function is shown in Code 3. It is in the reserved area of the timer's interrupt handler in *TickTimerint.asm*.

Code 3. Processing Data at Period's End

```
;-----
; Insert your custom code below this banner
;-----

    push A
    mov [_wSaveCountNum+1],[_wFirstValue+1]
    mov [_wSaveCountNum+0],[_wFirstValue+0]
    mov A,[_wLastValue +1]
    sub [_wSaveCountNum+1],A
    mov A,[_wLastValue +0]
    sbb [_wSaveCountNum+0],A

    mov [_cSaveOverflow] ,[_cOverflow]
    mov [_wSaveTickNum + 0],[_wTickCount + 0]
    mov [_wSaveTickNum + 1],[_wTickCount + 1]

    mov A,ffh
```

```

mov [_cOverflow],A
mov [_wTickCount + 0],A
mov [_wTickCount + 1],A
mov [_bDataAvailable],A
pop A
;-----
; Insert your custom code above this banner
;-----

```

This routine subtracts the second timer from the first to determine the time value and stores it in a variable accessible by the main program. The cycle count is also copied to such a variable before it is reinitialized to -1. And lastly, the semaphore is set.

These functions run in the background to produce a count value and time value. They are converted to a frequency in the main program.

Main Program

The main program is shown in Code 4 and can be found in *main.c* of the project associated with this Application Note.

Code 4. Main Program

```

#define SYSCLOCK 24000000.0
#define FCLOCK (SYSCLOCK / 368.0)
#define PERIOD 65536.0
#define FSAMPLE (FCLOCK / PERIOD)

void main()
{
  Comparator_Start(Comparator_HIGHPOWER);
  SampleFreq_Start();
  PRT0DR = 0x80; //Enable Input Pullup P0.7
  PRT1DR = 0x0c; //Set P1.2 & P1.3 High
  LCD_Start();
  M8C_EnableGInt;
  StartFreq(); //Start TickTimer, Initialize
  while(1){
    bDataAvailable = 0x00;
    while(bDataAvailable == 0x00);
    PRT1DR |= 0x80; //LED On
    if(cSaveOverflow < 0)fFreqValue = 0.0;
    else if (cSaveOverflow > 0){
      fFreqValue = (float)(cSaveOverflow);
      fFreqValue *= 65536.0;
      fFreqValue += (float) wSaveTickNum;
      fFreqValue += 1.0;
      fFreqValue /= FSAMPLE;
    }
    else{//No Overflow
      if( wSaveTickNum ==0)fFreqValue = 0.0;

```

```

    else{
      fFreqValue = (float) wSaveTickNum;
      fFreqValue *= FCLOCK;
      fFreqValue /= (float)wSaveCountNum;
    }
  }
  DisplayValue();
  PRT1DR &= ~0x80; //LED Off
}
}

```

The program starts with the system definitions. It then initializes the variables, starts the user modules, enables the interrupts, and starts the background frequency measuring process. It then goes into a continuous loop that:

- Clears the bDataAvailable flag
- Waits for this flag to be set again
- Turns on the LED
- Calculates the measured frequency
- Displays this value with the cycle count and timer values
- Turns off the LED

Upon examination of the code, four of the six steps are apparent and need no more discussion. The LCD display is separate function. Its purpose is to write the calculated frequency value to the LCD. For the interested reader, this function's code can be in the project associated with this Application Note. It is not discussed here. This leaves the code frequency calculation.

There are four different conditions that cause the different methods of calculation:

- cSaveOverflow < 0
- cSaveOverflow = 0. wSaveTickNum = 0
- cSaveOverflow = 0. wSaveTickNum > 0
- cSaveOverflow > 0

$cSaveOverFlow < 0$

This condition results when no captures are acquired within the timer period. The frequency must be less than the sample rate so the calculated frequency is set to zero.

$cSaveOverFlow = 0$. $wSaveTickNum = 0$

This condition results when only one capture is acquired within the timer period. The frequency must be less than the minimum allowable input frequency sample rate so the calculated frequency is again set to zero.

$cSaveOverFlow = 0$. $wSaveTickNum \neq 0$

This condition results when the input is in range. The frequency is calculated using Equation 15.

$cSaveOverFlow > 0$

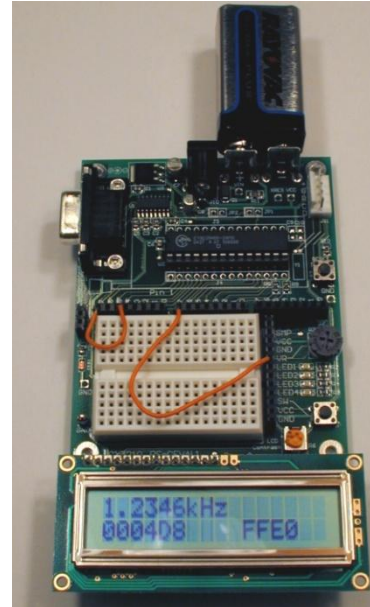
This condition results when the input frequency exceeds the maximum allowable input frequency. This now becomes a problem of measuring counts for a fixed time. The frequency is calculated using Equation 3.

This conversion to a different measurement technique enables an increase in range. The new maximum input frequency is determined by the time needed to service the capture of the input signal. The period of the input signal must be greater than the time required to service this interrupt.

This interrupt requires 91 CPU cycles. For a 24 MHz CPU clock, this makes the maximum input frequency to be no greater than 260 kHz. For a 12 MHz CPU clock, it drops to 130 kHz. For inputs of higher frequency, another solution is required. One method is to reconfigure the digital blocks to count the cycles for a fixed time. Another solution is to place an 8-bit counter in front of the input to divide down the input frequency (prescaler).

Figure 13 shows this project implemented on a PSoC Evaluation Board.

Figure 13. A Working Frequency Meter



Note The 24-bit cycle count value and 16-bit timer value appear in the lower line. For verification, the system clock can be calculated by working back from the measured frequency, count value, and timer value. For the values displayed in Figure 13, it works out to be 24,000,497 Hz.

Roughly 16 ppm of Error (App. 25,000 ppm)

When you build the frequency meter, sometimes variations may occur. For example, on giving an input of 10 KHz there might be an answer of 10.127 kHz.

This discrepancy is the result of the input being measured relative to a clock frequency generated from the internal system clock (24 MHz). This system clock has a worst-case error of 2.5%. This project was developed with the internal system clock because the evaluation board does not come with the crystal components installed.

The following steps show how to modify the example using a crystal-controlled clock.

The evaluation board must be altered. Execute the following:

- Remove **R8** and **R9**
- Install a **32.768 kHz clock crystal** in location **Y1**
- Install a **12 pF** capacitor in location **C10** and a **100 pF** capacitor in location **C9**

The following PSoC parameters must be changed:

- **P1[0]** drive must be set to **XtalOut** and **P1[1]** drive must be set to **XtalIn**
- Global resource **32K_Select** must be set to **External**

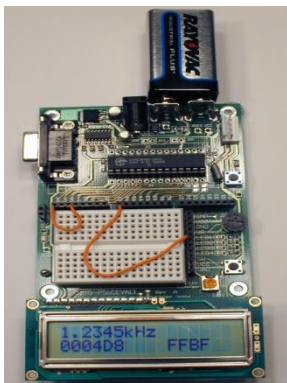
- Global resource **PLL_Mode** must set to **Ext Lock**

The system clock is now crystal controlled. It is 732 times the crystal frequency, or 23.986 MHz, instead of the standard 24 MHz. It requires that the SYSCLOCK definition in *main.c* be changed to 23986176.0.

This new system clock frequency requires the period of the sample signal source to be changed to 9715 for the desired 1.2345 kHz test frequency.

All these project changes can be found in the project folder `...FrequencyProjectPLL` associated with this Application Note. [Figure 14](#) shows this crystal-controlled frequency meter.

Figure 14. Crystal-Controlled Frequency Meter



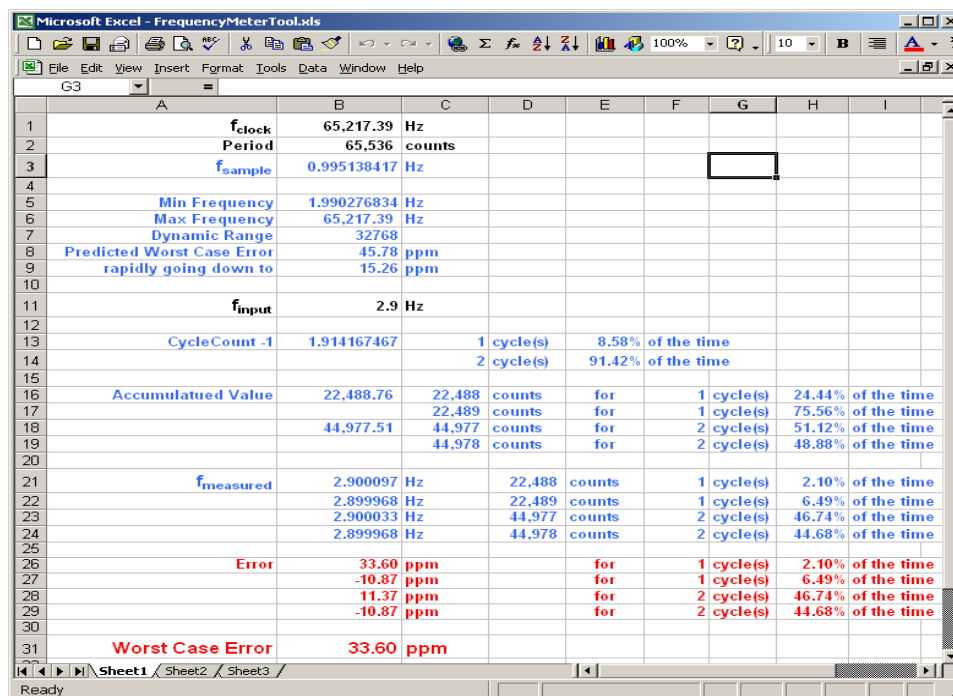
You might notice that the two resistors have been removed. Also, the two capacitors and a crystal have been added.

The system clock can be calculated by working back from the measured frequency, count value and timer value. For the values displayed in [Figure 14](#), it works out to be 23,986,462 Hz.

Building Your Own

This example was developed for particular specifications. Your project will most likely have a different set of requirements. A spreadsheet has been provided that enables the user to select the clock frequency and timer size. The results are the sample rate, and minimum and maximum acceptable input frequencies. The user may input a frequency and determine the relative error of the measurement. *FrequencyMeterTool.xls* is in the project folder associated with this Application Note. It is shown in [Figure 15](#).

Figure 15. FrequencyMeterTool.xls



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	f_{clock}	65,217.39 Hz							
2	Period	65,536 counts							
3	f_{sample}	0.995138417 Hz							
4									
5	Min Frequency	1.990276834 Hz							
6	Max Frequency	65,217.39 Hz							
7	Dynamic Range	32768							
8	Predicted Worst Case Error	45.78 ppm							
9	rapidly going down to	15.26 ppm							
10									
11	f_{input}	2.9 Hz							
12									
13	CycleCount -1	1.914167467	1 cycle(s)	8.58%	of the time				
14			2 cycle(s)	91.42%	of the time				
15									
16	Accumulated Value	22,488.76	22,488 counts	for	1 cycle(s)	24.44%	of the time		
17			22,489 counts	for	1 cycle(s)	75.56%	of the time		
18		44,977.51	44,977 counts	for	2 cycle(s)	51.12%	of the time		
19			44,978 counts	for	2 cycle(s)	48.88%	of the time		
20									
21	$f_{measured}$	2.900097 Hz	22,488 counts		1 cycle(s)	2.10%	of the time		
22		2.899968 Hz	22,489 counts		1 cycle(s)	6.49%	of the time		
23		2.900033 Hz	44,977 counts		2 cycle(s)	46.74%	of the time		
24		2.899968 Hz	44,978 counts		2 cycle(s)	44.68%	of the time		
25									
26	Error	33.60 ppm		for	1 cycle(s)	2.10%	of the time		
27		-10.87 ppm		for	1 cycle(s)	6.49%	of the time		
28		11.37 ppm		for	2 cycle(s)	46.74%	of the time		
29		-10.87 ppm		for	2 cycle(s)	44.68%	of the time		
30									
31	Worst Case Error	33.60 ppm							

Summary

The hybrid method of frequency measurement works over a wide range, detects over-range and under-range values, and outputs an answer at the prescribed rate. It efficiently uses PSoC device resources, requiring one, two or three digital blocks, depending on resolution and method of generating a timer capture interrupt.

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Document History

Document Title: AN2283 – PSoC® 1 Measuring Frequency

Document Number: 001-32359

Revision	ECN	Orig. of Change	Submission Date	Description of Change
**	1491203	SWU	09/20/2007	Re-catalogued application note.
*A	3220248	DASG	04/08/2011	The following changes have been made to Application Note AN2283: The version of the PSoC Designer is changed to 5.1 in page 1 of the document. In page 6 of the document, the word 'been' is changed to 'be'. The project associated with the AN is upgraded from PSoC Designer 4.2 to 5.1 The pin names are changed to 'Test_SignalOut' and 'Signal_Input'.
*B	3301545	DASG	07/04/2011	Removed "extern" for the variable fFreqValue from <i>main.c</i> . Title changed to PSoC® 1 Measuring Frequency – AN2283.
*C	4361939	MSUR	04/25/2014	Updated example projects to PSoC Designer 5.4. Updated in new template. Completing Sunset Review.
*D	5690101	AESATMP8	04/19/2017	Updated logo and Copyright.

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