A SIMPLE ISOLATION AMPLIFIER USING THE UC1901

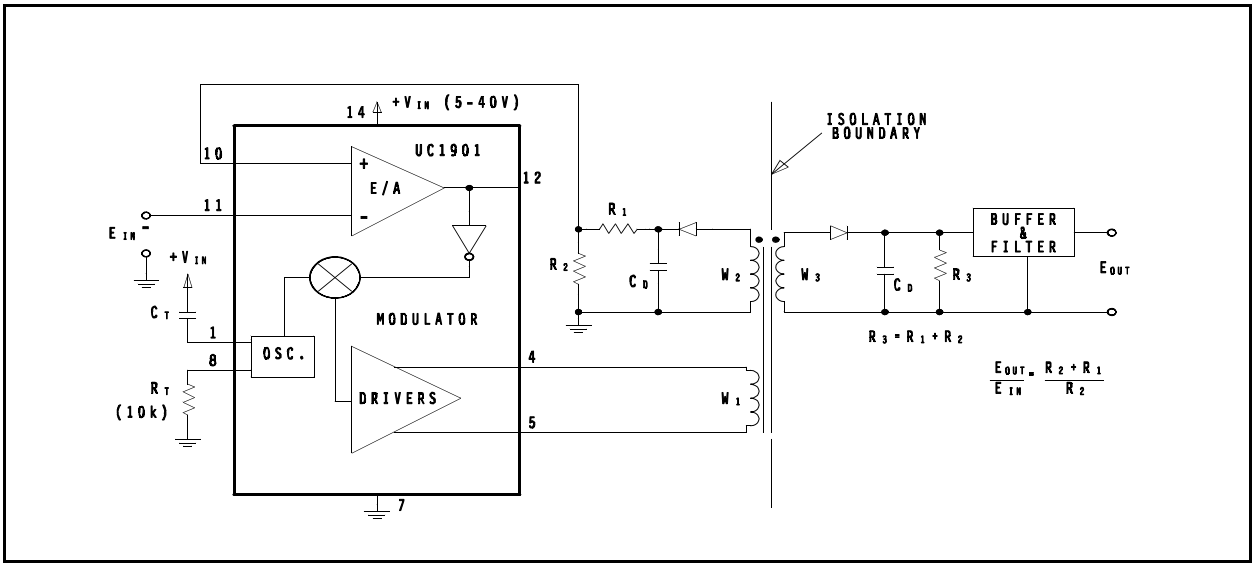
The UC1901 Isolated Feedback Generator has other applications besides providing isolated feedback in switching power supplies. This IC's amplitude modulation system and error amplifier can be used to implement a very low cost, high bandwidth, isolation amplifier. Isolation amplifiers of this type find use in switching power supplies, motor controls, instrumentation, industrial controls and medical systems.

The UC1901 generates a programmable high frequency carrier signal (up to 5MHz) with an amplitude that is controlled by a high gain error amplifier. In a typical feedback application, this amplifier and modulator are used, in conjunction with the UC1901's 1.5V reference and a small signal coupling transformer, to provide precision regulation for an isolated switching power supply. Capacitively coupled feedback around the UC1901 error amplifier determines the device's small signal AC response, but the DC operating point is determined by the requirements of the overall power supply loop. By adding an additional winding on the coupling transformer and a demodulator circuit for this winding, local DC feedback can be provided to the UC1901's error amplifier. In this mode very accurate DC, as well as small signal, AC, transfer functions can be established across the isolation boundary.

The configuration of an isolation amplifier using the UC1901 is shown in the figure below. The drivers on the UC1901 couple an amplitude modulated carrier to two matched windings (W2 and W3) on a small signal transformer. The demodulated signal from winding W2 is used to provide feedback to the UC1901's error amplifier while the demodulated signal from W3 is the isolated output signal. The use of the feedback winding linearizes the transfer function of the overall amplifier and allows DC signals to be accurately transferred. Matching of the two demodulator windings and demodulator circuits is important to maximize linearity and minimize DC offsets. An optional output buffer and filter will reduce residual carrier ripple and isolate the output demodulator from its load. The internal gain compensation on the UC1901 is sufficient for stable operation with overall gains down to 12dB. This circuit requires a supply voltage to the UC1901 that, if not available in the system already, can be generated using a second similar circuit operating in the reverse direction.

The primary features of this circuit are:

1. Good Signal Linearity
2. Wide Bandwidth (3dB Bandwidths > 500kHz)
3. High Isolation Capability
4. Low Cost



A Low Cost, High Bandwidth, Isolation Amplifier: An additional feedback winding linearizes the transfer function of the amplifier by matching the coupling characteristics to the isolated output.

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