## Signal Conditioning at the Tap



## ΔΠΤΡΟΠΙΧ

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Prepared for: SCTE - Golden Gate Chapter Date: 3/24/2021



**Golden Gate Chapter** 

## For Today's Review

#### Signal Conditioning at the Tap

- Review Sample Tap Designs
- Review Conditioning
- Discuss benefits of conditioning
- Show examples where Conditioning is Required

## Sample Tap Designs & Level Calcs



#### Below is a Tap String noted on a system print and we'd like to know the levels



#### **Organization is Key**

- If you wish to repeat this exercise and change levels etc. taken the time to build in Excel is recommended
- Regardless if Excel, pen and paper or in your head, organizing the key 'variables & constants' is key

## Sample Tap Designs & Level Calcs





#### **Required**

- Amplifier Bandwidth or (High / Low) Forward Freq [MHz]
- Amplifier Forward Level (High / Low) [dBmV]
- Amplifier Return Level Input [dBmV]
- Tap Value Insertion Loss [dB] (See Mfg. Tap Specifications)
- Cable Type & Footage tap to tap
- Cable Loss of above [High / Low]
- Regardless if Excel, pen and paper or in your head, organizing the 'variables & constants' is key



This Calculation is for 860MHz/55MHz –

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We will keep arithmetic simple and show cable spans as 100 feet....(Use below for real world variances)

$\frac{\text{Cable Loss}}{2.3 \text{ dB}} \times \text{dB}$	Cross Multiply (2.3*110)=100x	<u>Divide</u> (2.3*110)/100=x
100 110		x=2.53dB

## Calculating Forward Levels and then Reverse





Note – Never Consider Tap Insertion Loss UNLESS you are going through BOTH hardline Input / Output Connectors {True for both Forward & Return Level Calculations}

## **Observations**





- Forward Tilt from +12dB to -1dB
- Ch 2 (55MHz) 11dBmV to 20.9dBmV
- Modem Transmit 42dBmV to 32.2dBmV

## What if You had to Design for N + 0 Output Levels?



- Higher Outputs are possible today due to improvements in the molecular chip sets.
- Gallium Nitride (GaN) is 'Silicon of Today' (64dBmV at 1.2G analog) Note – If N+1 or N+2 Derate [make lower] 4dBmV



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## Design Attempt Info



System Node Example No Conditioning

- Levels- (1218M/55M) with 20/11 dBmV min @tap
- 4dB min tilt
- 13dBmV Ret In
- 43dBmV Max Modem Upstream Level at Tap

## Design Attempt Below (N + 0) – Full Output



System Node Example - No Conditioning (Return  $\Delta$  on Plant Side)

Levels- (1218M/55M) with 20/11 dBmV min @tap, 4dB min tilt, 13dBmV Ret In, 43dBmV Max Modem Upstream Level at Tap



All Levels are Analog

Focusing on Modem Transmit:  $\Delta$  Modem Upstream = 15  $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 17  $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 18

### Design Attempt Below (N + 2) Same Node, Derate 4dBmV



*The 4dBmV Derate would probably be across the full spectrum, but just derating High End for illustration – The Point is, Excel is Faster* 

System Node Example - No Conditioning (Return  $\Delta$  on Plant Side)

Levels- (1218M/55M) with 20/11 dBmV min @tap, 4dB min tilt, 13dBmV Ret In, 43dBmV Max Modem Upstream Level at Tap



- Focusing on Modem Transmit:
- Δ Modem Upstream = 15
- $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 17

 $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 18

We Can See that as BW and Levels Increase, Tap Level Variances Grow Beyond Acceptable Limits

In the previous examples the High Outputs of N + O and N + 1 Or 2 **demand** some enhancement over legacy design.

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This will continue as there is Strong Movement Towards 1.6G and 1.8G Bandwidth

Even on Existing Plant:

-Low Transmit Modems on the End of Line Taps bring Node SNR down

 High Value First Tap can result in Modem Max Transmit Issues (If too high). Lowering Return Plant Level to cure WILL lower Node SNR 1:1

### **Tap Conditioning**



- Methods to Enhance both Existing & Future Designs
- These Methods Produce a Tighter Range for both Forward & Return Levels Tap to Tap
- Designs are more Efficient, Resulting in Improved Performance
- In New Design Cases: Can Produce Longer 'Coherent' Tap Strings thus Requiring Less Nodes / Amplifiers
- Training is Less Difficult
- Setting Meter's Whole House Check in a 'Tighter Range' Will Reduce Repeat Service Calls



Let's Look at a Tap's Schematic.....

## Comparison of Standard vs. Conditioned Tap



#### **Standard Multitap**

Signal Conditioned Multitap



- Conditioning has no impact on tap insertion loss (through loss)
- Conditioning only impacts tap ports
- As depicted, ALL TAP PORTS are conditioned (cannot condition individual port)







## Cable Simulators and Equalizers:

- Most commonly used
- 'NOT DIPLEXED' which means if an MSO starts at 42M return then goes to 85M, 200M and beyond these plug-ins don't care
- They are 'Full Band' devices

Remember – A Diplex Filter is simply a Frequency Sensitive Splitter that Routes a Certain 'Band of Frequencies' one way & another Band the Other Way







## High Tap Value – Cable Simulator





Cable Simulator – Used in Beginning Tap(s)





- Excess positive tilt at the tap ports.
- 'Loud Talker' modems from these locations.

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Cable Simulator – Used in Beginning Tap(s)

System Example #1 - After Conditioning (CSG-09)



Тар	Forward	Tilt Comp	Return	Final Results
23	23 + CSG-09 = 32dB	9dB	23dB	32dB FWD/23dB RTN

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Cable Equalizer – Used in the End of Line Tap(s)



## Low Tap Value – Cable Equalizer







#### System Example #1 – Before Conditioning



- 1. High negative tilt at the tap ports.
- 2. Low Talking Modem.
- 3. Noise/ingress coming from these tap locations.
- 4. As noise is "Funnel Effect", these locations will bring down the SNR levels for the entire node.

## Cable Equalizer – Used in the End of Line Tap(s)

![](_page_23_Picture_1.jpeg)

#### System Example #1 – After Conditioning (CEG-10)

![](_page_23_Figure_3.jpeg)

Тар	Forward	Tilt Comp	Return	Results
8	8dB	9dB	8dB + CEG-10 = 17dB	8dB FWD/17dB RTN

![](_page_24_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Simple Tap String Conditioning Example

- Now let's look at typical design:
  - What are 'low talkers' and how do we cure them?
  - How do we provide better tilt at the tap?
  - How do we improve SNR performance?

Note – Moving Forward levels will either be at 860MHz/55MHz due to Actual BW and Output or 'Equivalized' to such.....

## Simple Tap String Conditioning Example- Before

![](_page_25_Picture_1.jpeg)

#### \*Levels- (860M/55M) with 18/10 dBmV min @tap, 2dB min tilt, 17dBmV Ret In

![](_page_25_Figure_3.jpeg)

 $\Delta$  High Tap to Low Tap =16dB  $\Delta$  Modem Upstream High-Low Tap 11dB  $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 13dB  $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 14dB

#### **Upstream Bell Graph**

![](_page_25_Figure_6.jpeg)

#### Cable Modem Count Distribution Upstream Transmit Power

![](_page_26_Figure_1.jpeg)

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![](_page_27_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Making Two Adjustments at End of Line

![](_page_28_Picture_1.jpeg)

System Node Example (Return △ on Plant Side)- After Conditioning \*Levels- (860M/55M) with 18/10 dBmV min @tap, 2dB min tilt, 17dBmV Ret In

![](_page_28_Figure_3.jpeg)

**Upstream Bell Graph** 

 $\Delta$  High Tap to Low Tap =16dB  $\Delta$  Modem Upstream High-Low Tap 4dB  $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 6dB  $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 7dB

![](_page_28_Figure_6.jpeg)

Source-Antronix -Rob Crowe, Rich Gregory

Let's examine a (Node + 0) design again:

![](_page_29_Picture_1.jpeg)

- What can we observe about high and low value tap management?
- How can we cure loud AND low talkers?
- How can we maintain tight forward levels?
- What method/s best maintain consistent upstream level?
- Which plug-in will provide positive tilt at every tap?
- How can we maximize tap cascade increasing active efficiency, reducing CAPEX?
- How do we improve SNR by adding return path attenuation at E.O.L. taps?

## *Remember Our Graph of N + 0 Output....*

![](_page_30_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_30_Figure_2.jpeg)

• There are formulas or a simple Excel Graph can help 'Equivalize' 1218MHz/105MHz Outputs to 860MHz/55MHz (as illustrated above) *Review of the Issues with No Condition N + 0 Design* 

![](_page_31_Picture_1.jpeg)

System Node Example - No Conditioning (Return △ on Plant Side) \*Levels- (860M/55M) with 18/11 dBmV min @tap, 4dB min tilt, 13dBmV Ret In, 43dBmV Max Modem Upstream Level at Tap

![](_page_31_Figure_3.jpeg)

 $\Delta$  High Tap to Low Tap =25  $\Delta$  Modem Upstream = 15  $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 17  $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 18

### Now an 8 Tap String with Conditioning

![](_page_32_Picture_1.jpeg)

System Node Example - With Conditioning (Return △ on Plant Side) \*Levels- (860M/55M) with 18/11 dBmV min @tap, 4dB min tilt, 13dBmV Ret In, 43dBmV Max at Tap

![](_page_32_Figure_3.jpeg)

![](_page_33_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_33_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### Reviewing the First Tap String we Started with - Conditioned

![](_page_34_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_34_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### Removing some Clutter

![](_page_35_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_35_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### Can add CEG-2 on 17 two way to reduce delta

![](_page_36_Figure_1.jpeg)

- Δ +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 6.9dB
- $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 7.9dB

- $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 4.6dB
- $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 5.6dB

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#### What if Later a New Directive Comes In?

![](_page_37_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_37_Figure_2.jpeg)

 $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 7.9dB

 $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 5.6dB

## Drop 1<sup>st</sup> Plate and increase Cable Sim- 40.5 max Tx

![](_page_38_Figure_1.jpeg)

- $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 4.6dB
- $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 5.6dB
- $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 4.2dB

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#### Can Take 2 CEG Back Out if Desired – Slight Increase to Delta

![](_page_39_Figure_1.jpeg)

 $\Delta$  +/- 2dB Amplifier Levels = 5.1dB

 $\Delta$  +/- 1dB Temperature Change = 6.1dB

these Cases

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![](_page_40_Picture_0.jpeg)

![](_page_40_Picture_1.jpeg)

So, We Can See the Design Flexibility, but What about Auto-Cad?

![](_page_41_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Can this be Designed in Auto-Cad ?

• Yes, All the Major Design Platforms are Capable of Loading Conditioner Types

- The Design Software states which Conditioner to use in the same way it determines Tap Value
- Conditioners are small 'plug ins' like a small eq
- Note Same is true for 'Window Taps' which is really 'Fixed Conditioned' Taps
- Window Taps create a much larger inventory of taps, vs. Standard Tap values and conditioner

## Identification Example

![](_page_42_Picture_1.jpeg)

• Typical Print Notation

• Typical Tap Notation

![](_page_42_Picture_4.jpeg)

![](_page_42_Figure_5.jpeg)

- Typical reference on network design print will denote *conditioned tap value* below conditioner type and value
- Affix label to tap plate as shown
- Tap will denote *original value* alongside value and type of installed conditioner

![](_page_43_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Conclusion

- Conditioning offers greater design flexibility, yielding consistency in both forward and return levels
- This in turn nets superior performance and reduces Capex by allowing the longest tap strings possible (Buy less Nodes & Amps)
- Greater Symmetry tap to tap affords tightening of whole house check windows, which in turn; reduce Opex & raise NPS
- Training Technicians is made easier by not having to explain a myriad of levels and tilts

![](_page_44_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Thanks for Your Time

![](_page_45_Picture_0.jpeg)