

LOW-VOLTAGE CMOS SWITCH WITH NOVEL CLOCK BOOSTING SCHEME

BACKGROUND

Related Applications

[0000] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/606,942, filed September 3, 2004.

Field

[0001] The present invention relates to semiconductor technology, and more specifically to a clock boosting scheme for Complimentary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor (CMOS) devices.

Background

[0002] CMOS semiconductor fabrication technologies have advanced to the point where the transistors are becoming progressively smaller in form factor. For example, sub-micron CMOS processes are becoming mainstream for fabrication of silicon devices on many consumer electronic systems. Smaller transistor sizes provide for, among other advantage, the capability to place more functions on a single die, decreased power requirements, and increased operating frequencies of the integrated circuit device. The increased frequencies are due in part to the smaller gate capacitances associated with the sub-micron transistors as well as a lower supply voltage swing.

[0003] Power dissipation limitations of the transistors and other reliability issues generally necessitate the use of lower supply voltages for integrated circuits incorporating sub-micron CMOS processes. For instance, too high a regular supply voltage will result in higher currents and a resulting energy dissipation that will, over time, tax the delicate structures of these ultra-small transistors, and eventually result in a degradation of functionality. Consequently, circuit designers generally rely on low supply voltages (LSV) in performing analog and digital integrated circuit design for circuits using sub-micron MOS processes.

[0004] The use of LSV presents a significant benefit for the operation of digital integrated circuits due to, among other advantages, the lower power dissipation associated with using lower voltages, and the preservation of the structural integrity of the transistors. The use of LSV in connection with analog circuits designed in a sub-

CMOS process, conversely, gives rise to certain challenges. One such challenge is presented, for exemplary purposes, in the context of switched-capacitor ("SC") circuits. Often one or more switches will reside on the signal path in front of a stage of sampling capacitors. A strong demand exists for a switch in various analog circuits, such as switched-capacitor circuits, which covers rail-to-rail voltage swings using LSV. Where the supply voltage is too low, the voltage on the signal path may cause the switch(es) to float or otherwise not operate properly. In such a case for certain values of the input voltage on the signal path, the floating switches may prevent the input signal from being sampled.

[0005] An example of this problem is represented in FIGS. 1 and 3. FIG. 3 depicts a basic example of a CMOS switch including NMOS transistor 301 and PMOS transistor 302. Capacitor C (304) represents a sampling capacitor at the output of the signal path V_{out} . An input voltage V_{in} is applied to the signal path at 301. Switch 306 represents an ideal sampling switch. The ideal switch is intended to demonstrate the performance of the CMOS switch, and subsequent circuits such as gain or integrator stages are ignored for the purpose of this illustration. The use of capacitor 304 and ideal switch 306 are for clarity and simplicity; the signal path may contain any number of switched capacitors or other analog components or circuits.

[0006] In many applications it is desirable for the CMOS switch to pass the signal V_{in} to the sampling capacitor 304 at V_{out} through the range where V_{in} goes from V_{GND} to V_{DD} , or vice versa. That is, whatever the value of V_{in} , the CMOS switch (comprised of transistors 300 and 302) should be configured to allow for conduction of the signal under certain conditions. Where the power supply is very low, however, a range of amplitude of V_{in} may exist wherein the output of the switch cannot conduct and the signal cannot be sampled. For example, where the supply voltage V_{DD} is less than the sum of the threshold voltages of NMOS transistor 300 and PMOS transistor 302 -- namely, $(|V_{th,p}| + V_{th,n})$ -- sampling of V_{out} cannot be achieved through the full signal swing of V_{in} . This situation represents a major shortcoming of CMOS analog integrated circuits using sub-micron fabrication processes, particularly in switched-capacitor and other analog applications.

[0007] FIG. 1 is a graphic illustration of the conductances of NMOS, PMOS, and CMOS switches as a function of the input voltage V_{in} (see FIG. 3). Plot 100 represents

a graph of the conductance g_{ds} of transistor 300 as a function of input voltage V_{in} (node 301). Plot 110 depicts a graph of the conductance g_{ds} as a function of V_{in} . Plot 112 represents a collective graph of the resulting CMOS switch (*i.e.*, transistors 300 and 302) as a function of V_{in} .

[0008] As can be seen graphically in FIG. 1 from plots 100 and 110, the magnitude of the power supply voltage V_{DD} as depicted by dashed vertical line 114 in each plot is less than the sum of the threshold voltages of the two transistors $V_{th,n}$ (plot 100) and $V_{th,p}$ (plot 110). Consider the conductance of the CMOS switch as signal V_{in} goes from a value of V_{GND} up to V_{DD} . Assume also, for the purpose of this illustration, that $\Phi_{nmos} = V_{DD}$ and $\Phi_{pmos} = V_{GND}$. When V_{in} 301 in FIG. 3 is equal to V_{GND} , then the gate-to-source voltage of transistor 300 = $V_{DD} > V_{th,n}$; hence, transistor 300 is fully on and at its maximum conductance g_{ds} as shown in plot 100.

[0009] As V_{in} in plot 100 becomes progressively larger, the gate to source voltage of NMOS transistor 300 approaches the threshold voltage $V_{th,n}$, thereby decreasing the drain current through transistor 300 and conductance g_{ds} . When V_{in} reaches a value of $V_{dd} - v_{th,n}$, then the gate-to-source voltage of transistor 300 equals the threshold voltage and the conductance g_{ds} of transistor 300 reaches zero as transistor 300 turns off. Transistor 300 remains off as V_{in} increases to V_{DD} , as shown in plot 100 of FIG. 1.

[0010] Plot 110 of FIG. 1 shows the concurrent behavior of PMOS transistor 302 in the same circuit and under the same conditions. When $V_{in} = V_{GND}$, then transistor 302 is off. As V_{in} reaches the threshold value $V_{th,p}$ of PMOS transistor 302, then transistor 302 begins to turn on, a drain current flows through transistor 302, and the conductance g_{ds} of transistor 302 begins to increase. The conductance g_{ds} of transistor 302 reaches its maximum value when $V_{in} = V_{DD}$, because the gate to source voltage of the PMOS transistor 302 is at its maximum.

[0011] Plot 112 of FIG. 1 represents the collective behavior of the CMOS switch in FIG. 3. Plot 112 is a superimposition of plots 100 and 110. From the illustration of plot 112, the problems associated with using LSV in analog circuit design become evident. In particular, a region of operation exists (represented by vertical dashed lines 115 and 116) wherein the CMOS switch is off, and the V_{in} signal cannot be sampled at the

output. The region where the circuit is inoperative in this illustration can be quantified as the region between the lower bound $V_{in} = V_{DD} - V_{th,n}$ (line 115) and the upper bound $V_{in} = V_{th,p}$ (line 116).

[0012] It will be appreciated that the principles of the circuit in FIG. 3 and the behavior of the circuit as shown in FIG. 1 is illustrative in nature, as many other circuits can be constructed which recreate essentially the same problem.

[0013] Various techniques to turn on and off floating switches and enable rail-to-rail sampling in analog circuits using LSV have been proposed in the literature. One such technique is boost the gate voltages of the switching transistors to $2 \times V_{DD}$. Another technique is to boost the gate voltages to $V_{DD} + V_{in}$. Using the former technique, only one boosting circuit is needed to feed the various analog circuits. A major disadvantage of the former technique, however, is that the resistance of the switch varies widely as a function of the gate-to-source voltage. More specifically, $V_{GS} = 2V_{DD} - V_{in}$; therefore, the output resistance of the transistor becomes dependant on V_{in} . Another disadvantage of using the former technique is the reliability issues that will result given that twice the power supply ($2 \times V_{DD}$) is applied to the gates of the transistors, likely causing eventual breakdown of the sub-micron transistor structures. In addition, the high gate voltage may cause undesirable currents to flow as a result of forward biasing the substrate of the transistor.

[0014] Using the latter technique has consequently been preferred because a substantially constant switch resistance can be obtained. That is, using the latter technique, $V_{GS} = (V_{DD} + V_{in}) - V_{in} = V_{DD}$. One major disadvantage of the latter scheme is that a boosting circuit is required for each floating switch on the analog portion of the integrated circuit chip. Such a technique would require a substantial increase in both total power consumption and the area of the die as numerous boosting circuits would have to be designed onto the chip.

[0015] Accordingly, a demand in the art exists for a reliable switching mechanism in LSV analog circuit applications like switched capacitor circuits that has the capability to cover rail-to-rail (e.g., power to ground) voltage swings using low supply voltages, while not causing unacceptable substrate or other leakage, not unduly increasing circuit complexity, and not introducing reliability problems.

SUMMARY

[0016] In one aspect of the present invention, a circuit for boosting the supply voltages of a CMOS switch for use in an integrated circuit designed using a sub-micron process, the circuit using voltage sources of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , includes a CMOS switch including a PMOS transistor coupled to an NMOS transistor, the CMOS switch including a PMOS gate, an NMOS gate, an input V_{in} and an output V_{out} , a first boosting circuit coupled to the NMOS gate, the boosting circuit configured to use capacitor ratios and clocking signals to boost the voltage at the NMOS gate by the quantity $(V_{DD} + k \times V_{DD})$, and a second boosting circuit coupled to the PMOS gate, the boosting circuit configured to use capacitor ratios and clocking signals to reduce the voltage at the PMOS gate by the quantity $(V_{GND} - k \times V_{DD})$, wherein k represents a factor chosen to allow sampling at V_{out} for values of V_{in} from V_{GND} to V_{DD} .

[0017] In yet another aspect of the present invention, a circuit for boosting the supply voltages of a CMOS switch for use in an integrated circuit designed using a sub-micron process, the circuit using voltage source of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , includes a signal path including an input and an output, a CMOS switch coupled to the signal path between the input and the output, a boosting circuit coupled to a gate of the CMOS switch, the boosting circuit including a plurality of capacitors and transistors, the ratio of the plurality of capacitors configured to boost the voltage at the gate to a value sufficient to allow sampling of the output for values of the input between V_{GND} and V_{DD} .

[0018] In still another aspect of the present invention, a boosting circuit used in integrated circuits designed in sub-micron CMOS technology, the boosting circuit including an output, a node, three gate inputs, and the integrated circuit using a power source of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , includes a first PMOS transistor coupled to V_{DD} , the output, and a first input of the three gate inputs, a first NMOS transistor coupled to V_{GND} , the output, and a second of the three gate inputs, a first capacitor coupled to the output and to V_{GND} , a second capacitor coupled to the output and to the node, a second PMOS transistor coupled to the node, V_{DD} , and a second of the three gate inputs, and a second NMOS transistor coupled to the node, V_{GND} , and the second of the three gate inputs.

[0019] In yet another aspect of the present invention, a method for boosting gate voltages of a CMOS switch, the CMOS switch coupled to a signal path comprising V_{in}

and V_{out} and including a PMOS gate and an NMOS gate, the CMOS switch using power sources of V_{DD} and V_{GND} and part of an integrated circuit designed in sub-micron CMOS technology, includes boosting a voltage value at the NMOS gate from V_{DD} to a value of $V_{DD} + (k \times V_{DD})$, and decreasing a voltage value at the PMOS gate from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{GND} - (k \times V_{GND})$; wherein k is chosen to enable sampling at V_{out} over the range of V_{in} from V_{GND} to V_{DD} .

[0020] In a further aspect of the present invention, a boosting circuit for boosting the voltages at the gates of a CMOS switch includes a signal path, CMOS switching means in the signal path for providing a V_{in} node and a V_{out} node, the CMOS switching means including NMOS and PMOS gates, NMOS boosting means for boosting a first voltage at the NMOS gate from V_{DD} to a value of $V_{DD} + (V_{DD} \times k)$, PMOS boosting means for decreasing a second voltage at the PMOS gate from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{GND} - (k \times V_{DD})$, and sampling means at the V_{out} node for sampling the V_{in} signal over the range from V_{GND} to V_{DD} .

[0021] It is understood that other embodiments of the present invention will become readily apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description, wherein it is shown and described only several embodiments of the invention by way of illustration. As will be realized, the invention is capable of other and different embodiments and its several details are capable of modification in various other respects, all without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the drawings and detailed description are to be regarded as illustrative in nature and not as restrictive.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] Aspects of the present invention are illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0023] FIG. 1 is a graphic illustration of the conductances of NMOS, PMOS, and CMOS switches as a function of the input voltage V_{in} .

[0024] FIG. 2 is a graphic illustration of the conductances of NMOS, PMOS, and CMOS switches as a function of the input voltage V_{in} in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0025] FIG. 3 is an analog CMOS transistor circuit including a CMOS switch, ideal switch, and sampling capacitor.

[0026] FIG. 4 is a boosting circuit for an NMOS transistor used in an LSV environment in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0027] FIG. 5 is a boosting circuit for a PMOS transistor used in an LSV environment in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0028] FIG. 6 is a set of timing diagrams illustrating the inputs to the boosting circuits of FIGS. 4 and 5 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0029] FIGS. 7a and 7b are graphical representations of the resistance R_{ON} of the CMOS switch of FIG. 3 versus the input voltage V_{in} in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0030] FIG. 8 is a graphical representation of the input and output waveforms in the time domain and the Fourier transform of the output signal in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0031] The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of various embodiments of the present invention and is not intended to represent the only embodiments in which the present invention may be practiced. Each embodiment described in this disclosure is provided merely as an example or illustration of the present invention, and should not necessarily be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments. The detailed description includes specific details for the purpose of providing a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In some instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form in order to avoid obscuring the concepts of the present invention. Acronyms and other

descriptive terminology may be used merely for convenience and clarity and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

[0032] A new clock boosting scheme is introduced herein which circumscribes the shortcomings of prior art techniques and which may be combined with a regular CMOS transmission gates in analog circuits. The scheme may be applied to a variety of analog NMOS, PMOS, or CMOS integrated circuits. According to the principles of the present invention, the voltage at the gates of NMOS transistors is increased by a magnitude sufficient to enable a MOS switch to operate properly using LSV. Similarly, the voltage at the gates of PMOS transistors is decreased by a magnitude sufficient to enable the MOS switch to operate properly using LSV. These boosted voltages may be low enough, however, to avoid injecting a forward bias into a junction diode and to avoid the introduction of reliability issues traditionally associated with high gate voltages on sub-micron transistors.

[0033] In one embodiment, the gate voltage of an NMOS transistor is maintained between the values V_{DD} and $(V_{DD} + V_{DD}/2)$. Similarly, the gate voltage of a corresponding PMOS transistor is maintained between the values V_{GND} and $(V_{GND} - V_{DD}/2)$. The boosting of gate voltages in this manner permits for sampling of an input signal through a full signal swing (e.g., from V_{GND} to V_{DD}) even for supply voltages that are less than the quantity $(|V_{th,p}| + V_{th,n})$.

[0034] In the illustrative configuration, the circuit in FIG. 3 represents the CMOS switch to which the concepts of the present invention will be applied. Specifically, the value of Φ_{NMOS} is boosted in one embodiment using the boosting circuit of FIG. 4. Likewise, the value of Φ_{PMOS} is decreased using the boosting circuit of FIG. 5. FIG. 6 represents graphs of the inputs to the boosting circuits in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0035] Prior to describing embodiments of the boosting circuits in FIGS. 4 and 5, we illustrate in FIG. 2 the advantages associated with application of the boosting technique of the present invention. Note that, while in some instances in this specification we assume $V_{GND} = 0$, this assumption is made for simplicity and clarity as V_{GND} may be another value.

[0036] Plot 200 shows a graph of the conductance of NMOS switch 300 as a function of the input voltage V_{in} (301). Unlike the plot of the switch's behavior as

represented in FIG. 1, the gate Φ_{NMOS} of the NMOS switch here has been increased to a value of $V_{\text{DD}} + (k \times V_{\text{DD}})$. The factor k may be chosen based on the particular process in light of the requirements posed by reliability issues. The conductance of switch 300 is at its maximum when $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{GND}}$. However, unlike in plot 100 of FIG. 1, the conductance of switch 300 remains positive from a value of $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{GND}}$ to $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{DD}} + (k \times V_{\text{DD}}) - V_{\text{th,n}}$. At $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{DD}} + (k \times V_{\text{DD}}) - V_{\text{th,n}}$, NMOS transistor 300 turns off. Comparing plot 200 of FIG. 2 to plot 100 of FIG. 1, it is apparent that the boosting scheme enables the NMOS switch 300 to retain conductance for a longer period of time.

[0037] Plot 202 represents the behavior of PMOS transistor 302 when the gate voltage Φ_{PMOS} is decreased to a value of $V_{\text{GND}} - (k \times V_{\text{DD}})$. Transistor 302 starts to conduct when $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{th,p}} - (k \times V_{\text{DD}})$, and reaches a maximum value when $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{DD}}$. Comparing plot 202 of FIG. 2 to plot 110 of FIG. 1, it is apparent that the boosting scheme enables the PMOS switch 302 to begin conducting at a lower input voltage.

[0038] The superimposition of plots 200 and 202 in FIG. 2 result in plot 204, which shows the resulting conductance of the CMOS switch defined by transistors 300 and 302 (see FIG. 3) as a function of input voltage. As can be seen from plot 204, throughout the range of $V_{\text{in}} = V_{\text{GND}}$ to V_{DD} , the switch is always on. As a result, the signal V_{out} at capacitor 304 can be sampled using Φ_2 at any value of V_{in} . In addition, the switches 300 and 302 can be changed to different states to close the signal path or facilitate some other desired circuit behavior. It should be understood that the boosting method according to the present invention is not limited to a switch incorporating a simple PMOS and NMOS transistor. Rather, the boosting scheme as described herein may be equally applicable to more elaborate switching mechanisms and analog circuits, while remaining within the scope of the present invention.

[0039] The boosting scheme according to the present invention may result in a substantially less complicated integrated circuit than in previous bootstrapped switches wherein each individual switch requires its own independent circuitry to function properly. The architecture proposed herein, however, may need in most cases to be designed only once for each of the clock cycles.

[0040] FIG. 4 is a boosting circuit 410 for an NMOS transistor used in an LSV environment in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The function of boosting circuit 410 is to boost the value of Φ_{NMOS} to a value of $V_{\text{DD}} + (k \times V_{\text{DD}})$ as

previously described. The node Φ_{NMOS} in FIG. 4 may be coupled to the node Φ_{NMOS} , and hence the gate, of transistor 300 in FIG. 3. The circuit of FIG. 4 includes NMOS transistors 402 and 408, PMOS transistors 400 and 406, and capacitors C1n and c2n. The bottom plate of capacitor C1n is coupled to V_{GND} , and the bottom plate of capacitor C2n is coupled to the source of transistor 406 and the drain of transistor 408. In addition, the source terminals of NMOS transistors 402 and 408 are coupled to V_{GND} , while the source terminals of PMOS transistors 400 and 406 are coupled to V_{DD} . The gate of transistor 400 is coupled to an input signal designated $\Phi3_b$. The gate of transistor 402 is coupled to an input signal designated $\Phi2$. The gates of transistors 406 and 408 are coupled to an input signal designated $\Phi1_b$. The input signals $\Phi1_b$, $\Phi2$, and $\Phi3_b$ may be generated in some embodiments by standard digital logic circuits or by software as known in the art.

[0041] FIG. 5 is a boosting circuit 510 for a PMOS transistor used in an LSV environment in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The function of boosting circuit 510 is to decrease the value of Φ_{PMOS} from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{\text{GND}} - k \times V_{\text{DD}}$ as previously described. The node Φ_{PMOS} in FIG. 5 may be coupled to the node Φ_{PMOS} , and hence the gate, of transistor 302 in FIG. 3. The circuit in FIG. 5 includes NMOS transistors 502 and 508, PMOS transistors 500 and 506, and capacitors C1p and C2p. The bottom plate of capacitor C1p is coupled to V_{GND} , and the bottom plate of capacitor C2p is coupled to the source of transistor 506 and the drain of transistor 508. The source terminals of transistors 502 and 508 are coupled to V_{GND} , and the source terminals of transistors 500 and 506 are coupled to V_{DD} . An input signal designated $\Phi2_b$ is coupled to the gate of transistor 500. An input signal designated $\Phi3$ is coupled to the gate of transistor 502. An input signal designated $\Phi1$ is coupled to the gates of transistors 506 and 508. The input signals $\Phi1$, $\Phi2_b$, and $\Phi3_b$ may be generated in some embodiments by standard digital logic circuits or by software as known in the art.

[0042] Shown in FIG. 6 is a timing diagram of the states of various input signals – namely, $\Phi1$, $\Phi2$, $\Phi3$, $\Phi1_b$, $\Phi2_b$, and $\Phi3_b$ – in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Each of these digital signals may be toggled from V_{GND} to V_{DD} , and may be generated using standard digital logic techniques, by software, or other methods. The behavior of the exemplary NMOS clock boosting circuit of FIG. 4 and

the exemplary PMOS clock boosting circuit of FIG. 5 will now be described in view of the input signals $\Phi 1$, $\Phi 2$, $\Phi 3$, $\Phi 1_b$, $\Phi 2_b$, and $\Phi 3_b$ shown in FIG. 6.

[0043] The CMOS switch of FIG. 3 may be turned off by charging Φ_{NMOS} and Φ_{PMOS} in FIGS. 4 and 5 to V_{GND} and V_{DD} , respectively. This is accomplished when $\Phi 2$ is active (high in this example). An active $\Phi 2$ couples Φ_{NMOS} to ground via transistor 402 as shown in FIGS. 4 and 6. $\Phi 2_b$ represents the opposite of signal $\Phi 2$, such that $\Phi 2_b$ is low whenever $\Phi 2$ is high. A low value of $\Phi 2_b$ couples Φ_{PMOS} to V_{DD} . In the switched capacitor circuits shown in these embodiments, the sampling clock phase is divided by two and is designated by $\Phi 1$ and $\Phi 3$ as shown in FIG. 6. When $\Phi 3$ is active (high), the top plates of capacitors at the nodes Φ_{NMOS} and Φ_{PMOS} (FIGS. 4 and 5, respectively) are charged to V_{DD} and V_{GND} , respectively. Note that $\Phi 3_b$ is the opposite to $\Phi 3$. At the same time, the bottom plates of $C2n$ (FIG. 4) and $C2p$ (FIG. 5) are connected to V_{GND} and V_{DD} , respectively, during $\Phi 2$ and $\Phi 3$. When $\Phi 1_b$ is low, the bottom plates of $C2n$ (FIG. 4) and $C2p$ (FIG. 5) are switched to V_{DD} and V_{GND} , respectively. This latter operation will transition the voltages at Φ_{NMOS} and Φ_{PMOS}

(FIGS. 4 and 5, respectively) by a factor of $\left| V_{dd} \times \frac{C2_{n,p}}{C1_{n,p} + C2_{n,p}} \right|$, where $C1$ and $C2$

represent the capacitor values in FIGS. 4 and 5. Accordingly, the boosted voltage at

Φ_{NMOS} (FIG. 4) will be equal to $V_{dd} + V_{dd} \left[\frac{C2n}{C1n + C2n} \right]$, and the boosted voltage at

Φ_{PMOS} will be equal to $V_{gnd} - V_{dd} \left[\frac{C2p}{C1p + c2p} \right]$ (FIG. 5). Note that the ratio $\frac{C2}{C1 + C2}$

can be used to determine the desired value of k , and the ratio can be precisely controlled and is substantially process independent.

[0044] Other circuit techniques using different methods for creating ratios to generate the factor k may be contemplated, and are within the scope of the present invention. In any event, the factor k may be controlled to boost/decrease the applicable voltages in a manner which is small enough so as not to place excessive voltage on the gates or other terminals of the switch transistors, but large enough to allow for conduction of the input signal over the entire range of V_{GND} and V_{DD} . In addition, while some leakage may occur through the substrate terminals of the switches connected to the gates Φ_{NMOS} and Φ_{PMOS} due in part to the boosted voltages at the respective

terminals, this leakage will be small and should not affect the sampling operation. Further, this leakage may be substantially negligible when compared with the leakage that may occur by doubling the power supply voltage at the gates, as in existing methods.

[0045] Simulations using HSPICE have been performed using the circuits in FIGS. 3, 4 and 5 to determine performance over a range of variables. For the purposes of the simulations, all switches are real (*i.e.*, implemented as MOS transistors with the associated non-ideal characteristics) with the exception of the ideal switch adjacent sampling capacitor C in FIG. 3. As noted above, the ideal switch is used in order to demonstrate the performance of the CMOS switch. The process used for the simulations is a 0.25 μm CMOS process; however, numerous other sub-micron MOS process may be contemplated by those skilled in the art.

[0046] FIG. 7 is a graphical representation of the resistance R_{ON} of the CMOS switch of FIG. 3 versus the input voltage V_{in} . The simulation changes the input voltage V_{in} from a value of 0 to V_{DD} , and calculates the corresponding value of R_{ON} of the CMOS switch. In FIG. 7a, the gate voltages of the CMOS switch are boosted. In FIG. 7b, the gate voltages are at the regular supply voltages. $V_{DD} = 1.2$ volts (circles), 1 volt (dots), 0.8 volts (triangles), 0.6 volts (squares), and 0.55 volts (asterisks). The embodiment in FIGS. 3, 4 and 5 is shown to be functional as V_{DD} is lowered from 1.2 volts down to 0.55 volts, where the absolute value of device threshold voltages (NMOS/PMOS) is approximately 0.54 volts. According to the principles of the present invention, the ratio between $C1_n$, $C2_n$, $C1_p$, and $C2_p$ may be optimized in order to obtain a relatively small value of R_{ON} of the CMOS switch, which optimization will depend on the specific process utilized and the supply voltage used in connection with a particular circuit design. In the simulations shown, however, the boosted voltages do not exceed $3 \times V_{DD}/2$. The R_{ON} of the CMOS switch is shown for boosted and for regular supply voltages in FIGS. 7a and 7b, respectively. In this simulated implementation, the largest R_{ON} is 5.3 K Ω for boosted supply voltages, and 490 K Ω for regular voltages when V_{DD} is equal to 0.6 volts. As can be readily observed from FIG. 7b, the CMOS switch using the regular supply voltage does not work in center regions of rail-to-rail voltage when V_{DD} is lower than 1.1 volts. Conversely, as shown in FIG. 7a, the boosted scheme is

almost perfect even where LSV approaches the threshold values of the individual devices.

[0047] FIG. 8 is a graphical representation of simulation results for input and output waveforms in the time domain (left graph), and the Fourier transform of the output signal (frequency domain, right graph). In this simulation, for illustrative purposes, the clock frequency is chosen to be 2 MHz and the signal frequency is chosen to be 20 KHz. The supply voltage is 0.6 volts and a full signal swing is provided from 0 volts to 0.6 volts. C1 and C2 (FIGS. 4 and 5) are set to 100 fF and C (see FIG. 3) is set to 1 pF. The aspect ratios of the devices for the CMOS switch are set to 12/0.3 μm . The other noncritical switches are chosen to be 4/0.3 μm . Spurious-free-dynamic range is 90 dB.

[0048] The previous description of the disclosed embodiments is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the present invention. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A circuit for boosting the supply voltages of a CMOS switch for use in an integrated circuit designed using a sub-micron process, the circuit using voltage sources of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , comprising:
 - a CMOS switch comprising a PMOS transistor coupled to a NMOS transistor, the CMOS switch comprising a PMOS gate, a NMOS gate, an input V_{in} and an output V_{out} ;
 - a first boosting circuit, separate from the NMOS transistor and coupled to the NMOS gate, the first boosting circuit providing a first capacitor ratio adapted to boost the voltage at the NMOS gate by the quantity $(V_{DD} + k_1 \times V_{DD})$ in response to receiving first clocking signals, wherein $k_{sub.1}$ comprises a factor determined in part by the first capacitor ratio; and
 - a second boosting circuit, separate from the PMOS transistor and coupled to the PMOS gate, the second boosting circuit providing a second capacitor ratio adapted to reduce the voltage at the PMOS gate by the quantity $(V_{GND} - k_2 \times V_{DD})$ in response to receiving second clocking signals,
 - wherein k_2 comprises a factor determined in part by the second capacitor ratio; wherein the factors k_1 and k_2 allow sampling at V_{out} for values of V_{in} from V_{GND} to V_{DD} .
2. The circuit of claim 1 further comprising a sampling capacitor at the output V_{out} .
3. The circuit of claim 1 wherein each of the factors k_1 and k_2 substantially equals 0.5.
4. The circuit of claim 1 wherein each of the factors k_1 and k_2 is further chosen to avoid excessive substrate leakage.
5. The circuit of claim 1 wherein each of the factors k_1 and k_2 is further chosen to avoid excessive gate voltage values.
6. The circuit of claim 1 wherein the first boosting circuit comprises a first capacitor $C1_n$ and a second capacitor $C2_n$ forming the first capacitor ratio used in part to determine k_1 .
7. The circuit of claim 6 wherein the second boosting circuit comprises a third capacitor

$C1p$ and a fourth capacitor $C2p$ forming the second capacitor ratio used in part to determine k_2 .

8. The circuit of claim 1 wherein V_{GND} is substantially equal to zero volts.
9. A circuit for boosting the supply voltages of a CMOS switch for use in an integrated circuit designed using a sub-micron process, the circuit using voltage source of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , comprising:
 - a signal path comprising an input and an output;
 - a CMOS switch coupled to the signal path between the input and the output;
 - a boosting circuit, separate from the CMOS switch and coupled to a gate of the CMOS switch, the boosting circuit comprising a plurality of capacitors and transistors, a ratio of the plurality of capacitors is configured to boost the voltage at the gate by a factor k to a value sufficient to allow sampling of the output for values of the input between V_{GND} and V_{DD} , wherein the factor k is determined in part by the ratio of the plurality capacitors.
10. The circuit of claim 9 wherein the gate is a NMOS gate and the boosting circuit is configured to boost the voltage at the NMOS gate from V_{DD} to a value of $(V_{DD} + k \times V_{DD})$.
11. The circuit of claim 10 wherein k substantially equals 0.5.
12. The circuit of claim 9 wherein the gate is a PMOS gate and the boosting circuit is configured to decrease the voltage at the PMOS gate from V_{GND} to a value of $(V_{GND} - k \times V_{DD})$.
13. The circuit of claim 12 wherein k substantially equals 0.5.
14. The circuit of claim 9 wherein the boosting circuit comprises capacitors $C1$ and $C2$, and the value of the boosted gate voltage is determined in part based on a ratio of $C1$ and $C2$.
15. The circuit of claim 9 further comprising a sampling capacitor at the output of the signal path.

16. The circuit of claim 9 wherein V_{GND} is substantially equal to zero volts.
17. A boosting circuit used in integrated circuits designed in sub-micron CMOS technology, the boosting circuit comprising an output, a node, three gate inputs, and the integrated circuit using a power source of V_{DD} and V_{GND} , comprising:
 - a first PMOS transistor coupled to V_{DD} , the output, and a first input of the three gate inputs;
 - a first NMOS transistor coupled to V_{GND} , the output, and a second of the three gate inputs;
 - a first capacitor coupled to the output and to V_{GND} ;
 - a second capacitor coupled to the output and to the node;
 - a second PMOS transistor coupled to the node, V_{DD} , and a second of the three gate inputs;
 - and a second NMOS transistor coupled to the node, V_{GND} , and the second of the three gate inputs.
18. The boosting circuit of claim 17, wherein the three gate inputs are configured to boost the voltage at the output from V_{DD} to a value of $V_{DD}+(k \times V_{DD})$.
19. The boosting circuit of claim 18, wherein k substantially equals 0.5.
20. The boosting circuit of claim 18, wherein the output is coupled to a NMOS gate of a CMOS switch.
21. The boosting circuit of claim 17, wherein the three gate inputs are configured to decrease the voltage at the output from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{GND}-(k \times V_{DD})$.
22. The boosting circuit of claim 21, wherein k substantially equals 0.5.
23. The boosting circuit of claim 21, wherein the output is coupled to a PMOS gate of a CMOS switch.
24. The boosting circuit of claim 17, wherein the three gate inputs are controlled by digital logic.
25. The boosting circuit of claim 17, wherein V_{GND} is substantially zero volts.

26. A method for boosting gate voltages of a CMOS switch, the CMOS switch coupled to a signal path comprising V_{in} and V_{out} and including a PMOS gate and a NMOS gate, the CMOS switch using power sources of V_{DD} and V_{GND} and part of an integrated circuit designed in sub-micron CMOS technology, the method comprising: boosting a voltage value at the NMOS gate from V_{DD} to a value of $V_{DD} + (k_1 \times V_{DD})$, wherein k_1 comprises a factor determined in part by a first capacitor ratio distinct from the CMOS switch; and decreasing a voltage value at the PMOS gate from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{GND} - (k_2 \times V_{GND})$, wherein k_2 comprises a factor determined in part by a second capacitor ratio distinct from the CMOS switch; wherein the factors k_1 and k_2 are chosen to enable sampling at V_{out} over the range of V_{in} from V_{GND} to V_{DD} .

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the factors k_1 and k_2 are further chosen to minimize the boosted voltages at V_{DD} and V_{GND} to avoid degradation of the CMOS switch.

28. The method of claim 26 wherein V_{GND} substantially equals zero volts.

29. The method of claim 26 wherein the boosting the voltage value and the decreasing the voltage value are performed by boosting circuits comprising switched capacitors.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the value of each of the factors k_1 and k_2 is determined in part using a ratio of two capacitors.

31. A boosting circuit for boosting the voltages at the gates of a CMOS switch, comprising:
a signal path;

CMOS switching means in the signal path for providing a V_{in} node and a V_{out} node,
the CMOS switching means including NMOS and PMOS gates;

NMOS boosting means, separate from the CMOS switching means, for boosting a first voltage at the NMOS gate from V_{DD} to a value of $V_{GND} + (V_{DD} \times k_1)$, wherein k_1 comprises a factor determined in part by a first capacitor ratio;

PMOS boosting means, separate from the CMOS switching means, for decreasing a second voltage at the PMOS gate from V_{GND} to a value of $V_{GND} - (k_2 \times V_{DD})$, wherein k_2 comprises a factor determined in part by a second capacitor ratio; and sampling means at the

Vout node for sampling the Vin signal over the range from V_{GND} to V_{DD} based on the factors k_1 and k_2 .