

MODIFIED CURRENT SOURCE (MCS) WITH SEAMLESS RANGE SWITCHING

BACKGROUND

[0001] High precision current sources are widely used in the process of testing and characterizing semiconductor devices. Such sources are often used in tests in which the sourced current is varied (swept) over several orders of magnitude (e.g., several pico-amperes to hundreds of milli-amperes).

[0002] As an example, we assume a logarithmic current sweep from a minimum current (I_{min}) to a maximum current (I_{max}), with $I_{min} = 100$ pA and $I_{max} = 10$ mA (i.e., eight orders of magnitude), with six steps per current decade (e.g., between 10 nA to 100 nA, the currents at each step would be 10 nA, 15.8 nA, 25.1 nA, 39.8 nA, 63.1 nA, and 100 nA, following the relation $I_n/I_{n-1} = 10^{0.2}$). Given that, generally for such an application, the current should not return to zero between steps, internal adjustments should take place “on-the-fly”, with minimal glitches or added noise on the actual current flowing to the DUT. As now discussed, this may be difficult to satisfy, since high-accuracy current sources usually rely on precision resistors (R_{net}) for current sensing and feedback.

[0003] We now discuss this issue with reference to Fig. 1. The output of the N-bit DAC 102 is the input voltage (V_{in}) to the current source. The feedback voltage is the voltage drop across R_{net} , namely $I_{dut} * R_{net}$ (neglecting offset voltages and input currents), leading to the following relation:

$$(1) \quad I_{dut} R_{net} = V_{in}$$

or

$$(2) \quad I_{dut} = \frac{V_{in}}{R_{net}}$$

25 Selecting the OpAmp 104 and the Diff Amp 106 to be high gain, low-leakage, and low offset (instrumentation-grade) components, the effect of V_{off} (offset voltage) and I_{in} (input leakage current) is basically negligible, except in situations with very low currents and very low levels of V_{in} . Furthermore, both V_{off} and I_{in} can be taken into account by measuring them separately at the beginning of each test, since they stay

fairly stable as long as the temperature does not change significantly, and then compensating based on those measurements.

- 5 [0004] Precision DACs are usually limited to a relatively narrow voltage range (0 to ± 2 Volt is typical). A 20-bit DAC (also typical for such applications) has a resolution of approximately $4/(2^{20})$ Volt $\sim 4 \mu\text{V}$. If the maximum current is limited to 200 mA, for example, a combination of $V_{in} = V_{in}(\text{max}) = 2.0 \text{ V}$ and $R_{net} = 10\Omega$ would be appropriate. On the other extreme, a current of 100 pA can be achieved with $V_{in} = 100 \mu\text{V}$ and $R_{net} = 1 \text{ M}\Omega$, or alternatively with $V_{in} = 10 \text{ mV}$ and $R_{net} = 100 \text{ M}\Omega$ (it is typically recommended to have $V_{in} \gg V_{off}$, as long as it is possible).
- 10 [0005] Regardless of the specific selection of V_{in} , there is generally a need for a wide range of R_{net} values. This by itself is not a problem, as long as the same R_{net} is used for the entire experiment. Unfortunately, in tests involving current sweeps with a ratio of $|I_{max} / I_{min}| > 100$ (two orders of magnitude), accommodating for a wide range of values is impractical. When voltage sources (VS) are used, switching different R_{net}
- 15 resistors in and out is possible, as long as switching transients are properly suppressed. Current sources (CS), on the other hand, rely on the voltage drop across R_{net} to complete the feedback loop, meaning that in-line switching is fundamentally problematic.

SUMMARY

- 20 [0006] In accordance with an aspect, a current source is provided with two resistor banks, and digital potentiometers are used to control how much each resistor bank affects the resulting output current. Furthermore, when the digital potentiometers are at a particular setting such that a particular resistor bank does not affect the resulting output current (i.e., the resistor bank is “inactive”), the resistance of that resistor bank
- 25 can be switched without affecting the output current, thus minimizing or eliminating discontinuities in the output current during a current sweep operation. Thus, for example, when a resistor bank meets its threshold and becomes inactive, the resistance of the inactive resistor bank may be switched, and then the digital potentiometer setting may be changed to facilitate smoothly reactivating that resistor bank, with the new
- 30 resistance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0007] Fig. 1 illustrates a conventional current source.

[0008] Fig. 2 illustrates a current source in accordance with an example embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

5 [0009] The inventors have realized that using a method and/or circuit such as described below, in-line switching of different Rnet resistors can occur as necessary, with no or minimal practical compromise on measurement accuracy, and no or minimal apparent glitch or noisy transients.

[0010] Fig. 2 schematically illustrates an example embodiment, which is referred to as
 10 a “Modified Current Source” (MCS). The Fig. 2 current source is similar to the Fig. 1 current source, but with several significant differences. For example, two Rnet resistors, referred to in Fig. 2 as Ra and Rb, are provided in place of a single Rnet resistor, where each Rnet resistor in the Fig. 2 example has an associated Differential Amplifier (Diff Amp A and Diff Amp B, respectively). A component, called a Digital
 15 Potentiometer (DPa) is connected between the outputs of Diff Amp A and Diff Amp B, with its “movable” terminal connected to the inverting input of the OpAmp 204. A pair of DACs (DACa and DACb) are provide in place of the single DAC 102 of Fig. 1. A second Digital Potentiometer (DPb) is connected between the outputs of the two DACs (DACa and DACb), with its movable terminal connected to the non-inverting input of
 20 the OpAmp 204.

[0011] The Digital Potentiometers DPa and DPb may comprise, for example, electronic chips with a fixed precision resistance between their two “static terminals” (10 kΩ or 100 kΩ are typical values). The position of their “movable” terminal may be electronically (digitally) stepped to an appropriate position (a range of 100 steps is
 25 typical), so that “X” varies between zero and one (i.e. 0.00, 0.01, 0.02, ..., 0.99, 1.00).

[0012] We now discuss an example operational scenario of the Fig. 2 circuit. In particular, the voltage at the inverting input of the OpAmp 204 (Vf), and the input voltage Vin can be characterized as:

30 (3)
$$V_f = I_{dut} R_a (1 - X) + I_{dut} R_b X$$

(4)
$$V_{in} = V_a (1 - X) + V_b X$$

[0013] Applying the equality between V_f and V_{in} (V_{off} neglected), using (3) and (4), an expression for I_{dut} is easily obtained:

$$(5) \quad I_{dut} = \frac{V_a(1-X) + V_b X}{R_a(1-X) + R_b X}$$

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[0014] To show how I_{dut} may be kept the same even when R_a or R_b are switched (i.e. changed to a different value), the following information is provided:

(i) *The ratio between R_a and R_b is either C or its reciprocal value $1/C$, where C is an arbitrary constant (i.e. $R_a = CR_b$ or $R_a = (1/C)R_b$).*

10 (ii) *Similarly, $V_a = CV_b$ or $V_a = (1/C)V_b$.*

[0015] Combining (i) and (ii), the following expression is obtained:

$$(6) \quad \frac{R_a}{R_b} = \frac{V_a}{V_b} = C \text{ or } 1/C$$

[0016] Substituting (6) in (5) for $R_a = CR_b$,

$$(7) \quad I_{dut} = \frac{V_a(1-X) + (1/C)V_b X}{R_a(1-X) + (1/C)R_b X} = \frac{V_a[1 - (1 - 1/C)X]}{R_a[1 - (1 - 1/C)X]} = \frac{V_a}{R_a}$$

15 Therefore, it can be seen that, for any value of X between 0.00 and 1.00, I_{dut} depends only on the ratio V_a/R_a and not on X . This result is similar when $R_a = (1/C)R_b$, since the term $1/C$ in both numerator and denominator of (7) becomes C , so the pre-factors of V_a and R_a cancel out. The value of C may be set to 10, for example, to use the same value of R_a (R_b) for a complete number of current decades (practically one or two at
20 most).

[0017] We now discuss an example of how the Fig. 2 circuit may be operated. To take advantage of (7), the value of X may be set to 0 when the following conditions are met:

(i) $R_a = 10R_b$; (ii) the voltage drop across R_a ($I_{dut}R_a$) is less than V_{max} (V_{max} is a parameter, usually in the range of 1.0 to 2.0 Volt). Similarly, X may be set to 1 when:

25 (i) $R_b = 10R_a$; (ii) the voltage drop across R_b ($I_{dut}R_b$) is below V_{max} . In this situation, the resulting voltage drop across the entire R_{net} (i.e. $I_{dut}R_a + I_{dut}R_b$) will not exceed 1.1 V_{max} . In practice, real-time code to cause one of the resistors R_a and R_b to be switched may be configured to account for the expected next level of current, and at

times makes the change in R_a or R_b when the related voltage drop is slightly less than V_{max} , to avoid a large increase in the resulting voltage drop before R_a or R_b is changed. This situation is common for logarithmic current sweeps, as the current and the resulting voltage drop across R_{net} may “jump” dramatically within a single step. In one example, the “switching out” of the larger of R_a and R_b may be accomplished using banks of different value resistors in R_a and R_b . Each of these resistors can be selected through a relay (switch) such that a larger value can be switched with a smaller value, or vice versa.

[0018] When the dominant voltage drop (namely $I_{dut}R_a$ or $I_{dut}R_b$) exceeds V_{max} (or is expected to exceed V_{max} in the next current level), the value of X is changed gradually from 0 to 1 (in case $R_a=10R_b$) or from 1.0 to 0 (in case $R_b = 10R_a$). The gradual change helps to avoid an abrupt disruption, which would not allow the feedback loop to compensate for the changes in voltage. For example, with $R_a = 10R_b$, and when $I_{dut}R_a$ reaches V_{max} , X has to change from 0 to 1. X is incrementally changed from 0 to 0.01 on DP_a and DP_b practically simultaneously since they are both clocked with the same signal. Next, a similar step from $X = 0.01$ to $X = 0.02$ is followed, and so forth until X reaches one in both DP_a and DP_b . Theoretically, such incremental steps may introduce a small current glitch (e.g., less than 1% of I_{dut}), but even such a small change is likely to be suppressed due to the internal time delay of the feedback loop.

[0019] Once the new value of X is established, the larger R_{net} (either R_a or R_b , depending on the range) is switched out and a new resistor, 1/100 its resistance, is switched in instead. For example, If R_a was 1.0 M Ω and R_b was 100 k Ω , X was 0 as long as $I_{dut} * R_{net}$ was below V_{max} . Once $I_{dut} * R_a$ reaches a value either larger than V_{max} or sufficiently close to V_{max} for R_{net} to change, X is changed from 0 to 1, as described above. Next, R_a is changed from 1.0 M Ω to 10 k Ω , so the new R_{net} is made of $R_b = 100$ k Ω and $R_a = 10$ k Ω . Lastly, V_a is changed to $0.01 * V_{max}$ (e.g., V_{max} is 2.0 V, then V_a is changed to 20 mV), so the appropriate ratio between V_b and V_a is set. Note that the “new” voltage drop across R_a is 0.01 of its “old” value. Also, by now, R_b is the large R_{net} , so $I_{dut} * R_{net}$ is 0.1 of the value, which triggered the change from $R_a = 1.0$ M Ω to $R_a = 10$ k Ω , and the current sweep continues. Once the current reaches the level where R_b is to be changed, a similar sequence will follow, and so forth until the

sweep is completed or the sweep direction is reversed (i.e., from increasing I_{dut} to decreasing I_{dut}).

[0020] When the sweep is “negative” (i.e. decreasing I_{dut}), the switching point takes place when the voltage drop across the larger R_{net} is just below $0.1V_{max}$. At this point, the smaller R_{net} (i.e. R_b for $X = 0$ or R_a for $X = 1$) will be “replaced” by a new resistor, 100 times its value. For example, we consider the previous example where $R_a = 1.0\text{ M}\Omega$ and $R_b = 100\text{ k}\Omega$, but this time for a negative current sweep ($I_n < I_{n-1}$). Since $R_a = 10R_b$, $X = 0$ as long as the value of $I_{dut} * R_a > 0.1V_{max}$. Once $I_{dut} * R_a$ drops further, X remains 0, but R_b is changed from $100\text{ k}\Omega$ to $10\text{ M}\Omega$ (a factor of 100).
 10 Only then, X is gradually changed from 0 to 1, following the same procedure as described above for the case of increasing current sweeps. At this point, the voltage drop across R_b is less than V_{max} , and the current continues its decreasing sweep and so forth.

[0021] The value of X remains fixed, as long as neither R_a nor R_b is changed. Thus,
 15 the sensitivity of the MCS can be enhanced with a slight deviation from (6), as now explained. For example, having two DACs allows for increasing the current resolution considerably by setting X to a small value ($X = \delta \ll 1$) instead of $X = 0.00$, and to $(1 - \delta)$ instead of $X = 1$. In this case, one resistor network contributes substantially to the output of the current source whereas the other resistor network contributes much less
 20 than substantially to the output of the current source. Thus, for example, the limits of “substantially” are where X is .10 and $1-X$ is 0.90 (or vice versa), and the limits of “much less than substantially” are where X is 0.01 and $1-X$ is 0.99 (or vice versa). We now describe an example with typical Digital Potentiometers with 100 steps, where the value of X is set to 0.01. In this case, the V_a contributes substantially and V_b
 25 contributes much less than substantially, using the limit set forth above. In this example, the resulting input voltage V_{in} becomes $0.99V_a + 0.01V_b$ for $X = 0.01$ (instead of V_a when $X = 0.00$) and $0.01V_a + 0.99V_b$ for $X = 0.99$ (instead of V_b for $X = 1.00$). By adjusting V_b around $V_a/10$ in increments of one LSB (Least Significant Bit) up to 100 LSBs, the resolution of V_{in} is increased by a factor of 100. Changing V_b by
 30 one LSB results in V_{in} changing by 0.01 LSB; changing V_b by 100 LSBs causes V_{in} to change by one LSB. When $X = 0.99$, V_a is similarly changed around $V_b/10$.

[0022] The technique described above is applicable if the DACs are stable. If, on the other hand, the DAC output “wiggles” within $\pm\text{LSB}$ (perfectly within specs), the technique may not improve resolution at all. However, since state of the art DAC technology implies stable DACs, the proposed technique is indeed effective.

- 5 [0023] In general, a small change in I_{dut} may be expressed as approximated by its total differential:

$$(8) \quad \Delta I_{dut} \approx \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_a} \Delta V_a + \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_b} \Delta V_b + \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial X} \Delta X$$

- 10 [0024] More interestingly, the relative change with respect to I_{dut} is:

$$(9) \quad \frac{\Delta I_{dut}}{I_{dut}} \approx \frac{1}{I_{dut}} \left[\frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_a} \Delta V_a + \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_b} \Delta V_b + \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial X} \Delta X \right]$$

[0025] Differentiating I_{dut} (equation (5)) with respect to V_a , V_b , and X gives:

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$$(10a) \quad \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_a} = \frac{I - X}{R_a(I - X) + R_b X}$$

$$(10b) \quad \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial V_b} = \frac{X}{R_a(I - X) + R_b X}$$

$$(10c) \quad \frac{\partial I_{dut}}{\partial X} = \frac{V_b R_a - V_a R_b}{[R_a(I - X) + R_b X][R_a(I - X) + R_b X]}$$

- [0026] Substituting (10a), (10b), (10c), and (6) into (9), and rearranging as necessary –
20 the final expression for the relative change in I_{dut} is obtained:

$$(11) \quad \frac{\Delta I_{dut}}{I_{dut}} \approx \frac{I - X}{V_a(I - X) + V_b X} \Delta V_a + \frac{X}{V_a(I - X) + V_b X} \Delta V_b + \\ + \frac{V_b R_a - V_a R_b}{[R_a(I - X) + R_b X][V_a(I - X) + V_b X]} \Delta X$$

- [0027] A first observation is that, as long as $V_a R_b = V_b R_a$, incremental changes in X do not have any effect on I_{dut} . This is the conclusion expressed in (6), which was
25 obtained using a simpler and less formal approach. Based on that, the procedure to

change R_{net} , described above for the “ideal” case (i.e. $V_a R_b = V_b R_a$, and $X = 0$ or 1.00 during steady state), may be modified by an initial step where the “Low Voltage” (V_b when $X = 0.01$; V_a when $X = 0.99$) is adjusted to its “ideal” level (i.e. $1/C$ of the “High Voltage”).

- 5 **[0028]** To quantify the impact of this step on I_{dut} , the case where $R_a = 10R_b$ may be considered. Since neither X nor V_a is changed while this new step is taken, the only change in I_{dut} is caused by returning V_b to its ideal value, namely reducing (or increasing) it by 100 LSBs. If the range of the DACs is from 0 to $\pm V_{max}$, V_{max} being its maximum output voltage, one LSB corresponds to $2V_{max}/2^n = V_{max}/2^{n-1}$, n being
- 10 the number of bits (e.g. 12 for a 12-bit DAC, 16 for a 16-bit DAC, etc.). The maximum change in V_b (100 LSBs) is therefore $100V_{max}/2^{n-1}$. Now, the lowest level of V_a is just prior to a range change during a high-to-low sweep. Assuming that V_{min} is practically limited to $V_{max}/20$ (a reasonable assumption since $V_a(max)$ should be relatively close to V_{max} for efficient use of the entire DAC range), equation (11) takes
- 15 the following form:

(11)

$$\frac{\Delta I_{dut}}{I_{dut}} \approx \frac{X}{V_a(1-X) + V_b X} \Delta V_b = \frac{0.01 \times 100 V_{max}}{2^{n-1} \left[0.99 \frac{V_{max}}{20} + 0.01 \frac{V_{max}}{200} \right]} \approx \frac{1.25}{2^{n-5}}$$

- [0029]** For 12-bit DACs, the ratio is about 1%, while for a 16-bit DAC, it is less than
- 20 0.1%. Clearly, this is a negligible tweak followed by a smooth transition, as described above for the “ideal” case.

- [0030]** In general, then, it can be seen that digital potentiometers are used to control how much each resistor bank affects the resulting output current. Furthermore, when the digital potentiometers are at a particular setting such that a particular resistor bank
- 25 does not affect the resulting output current (i.e., the resistor bank is “inactive”), the resistance of that resistor bank can be switched without affecting the output current, thus minimizing or eliminating discontinuities in the output current during a current sweep operation. Thus, for example, when a resistor bank meets its threshold and becomes inactive, the resistance of the inactive resistor bank may be switched, and then
- 30 the digital potentiometer setting may be changed to facilitate smoothly reactivating that resistor bank, with the new resistance (though there may be a slight pause in the current

sweep as the resistor bank reaches its threshold and the new resistance for that resistor bank is switched in). An example of such switching is illustrated in the table below, which describes an example of the circuit parameters as the switching is accomplished.

Va	2	2	2	2	2
Vb	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Vin	2	1.64	1.28	0.56	0.2
Vf	2	1.64	1.28	0.56	0.2
VRa	2	2	2	2	2
VRb	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ra	1000ohms	1000ohms	1000ohms	1000ohms	1000ohms
Rb	100ohms	100ohms	100ohms	100ohms	100ohms
X	0	0.2	0.4	0.8	1
1-X	1	0.8	0.6	0.2	0
Output	2mA	2mA	2mA	2mA	2mA

5 **[0031]** We have thus described a method and circuit that addresses inherent limitations of conventional current sources (CS), where some features of a modified current source (MCS) may include, in an example embodiment:

- 10 (i) Two Rnet resistors in series (Ra and Rb, which are selected resistors of a resistor bank, where each bank includes several resistors that are appropriate for the desired current range of the current source), where the ratio of their respective resistances is either 0.1 or 10.
- 15 (ii) Two identical DACs, where the ratio of their output voltages is set to 0.1 or 10, according to the resistor ratio described in (i) above.
- 20 (iii) Two digital potentiometers (DPa and DPb). The fixed terminals of DPa are connected to the outputs of the differential amplifiers of Ra and Rb, while the fixed terminals of DPb are connected to the output of DACs (Va and Vb). The “movable” terminals of DPa and DPb are connected to the inverting and to the non-inverting inputs of the operational amplifier, respectively.
- 25 (iv) The configuration described in (i) – (iii) above allows the feedback voltage Vf to follow either $I_{dut} * R_a$ or $I_{dut} * R_b$, as appropriate. In addition, Rnet (i.e., Ra or Rb) can be replaced by a different resistor; all with no apparent current glitch or noise. Generally, the circuit facilitates a proportionality of output voltage depending on the relative contribution by the resistors and the resistance values of the resistors.
- 30 (v) Finally, operating in the optimized range of voltage drops across the larger Rnet (Ra or Rb) assures no compromise on accuracy and sensitivity.
- 35 (vi) Changing X to 0.01 ($R_a > R_b$) and 0.99 ($R_b > R_a$) from the respectively “ideal” 0.00 and 1.00 values, increases the overall source resolution by a factor of 100 (> 6 digits).

What is claimed is:

1. A current source configured for substantially seamless range switching,
comprising:
 - a first resistor network having an input and an output, wherein the resistance of
5 the first resistor network is dynamically configurable; - a second resistor network having an input and an output, wherein the resistance
of the second resistor network is dynamically configurable, the output of the first
resistor network is connected to the input of the second resistor network, and the
output of the second resistor network is configured to be connected to provide current
10 to a device under test; - a first differential amplifier having an output, a non-inverting input and an
inverting input, the non-inverting input connected to the input of the first resistor
network and the inverting input connected to the output of the first resistor network; - a second differential amplifier having an output, a non-inverting input and an
15 inverting input, the non-inverting input connected to the input of the second resistor
network and the inverting input connected to the output of the second resistor
network; - a first digital potentiometer having a first input, a second input and an output, the
first input connected to the output of the first differential amplifier and the second
20 input connected to the output of the second differential amplifier, wherein the first
digital potentiometer is configured to provide a signal at the output that includes, in a
first selectable proportion, a combination of a signal at the first input of the first
digital potentiometer and of a signal at the second input of the first digital
potentiometer; - 25 an operational amplifier having a non-inverting input, an inverting input and an
output, the output connected to the input of the first resistor network and the inverting
input connected to the output of the first digital potentiometer; and - a second digital potentiometer having a first input, a second input and an output,
wherein the second digital potentiometer is configured to provide a signal at the
30 output that includes, in a second selectable proportion, a combination of a signal at the
first input of the second digital potentiometer and of a signal at the second input of the
second digital potentiometer, the output of the second digital potentiometer connected
to the non-inverting input of the operational amplifier.

2. The current source of claim 1, further comprising:
a first digital to analog converter, having an output connected to the first input of
the second digital potentiometer; and
a second digital to analog converter, having an output connected to the second
5 input of the second digital potentiometer.
3. The current source of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
the current source is configured such that the first selectable proportion and the
second selectable proportion are constrained to be substantially identical.
4. The current source of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
10 the current source is configured such that the first selectable proportion is
selectable to be X to $1-X$, where X is a real non-negative number less than or
equal to 1.0.
5. The current source of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
the second selectable proportion is selectable to be X to $1-X$, where X is a real
15 non-negative number less than or equal to 1.0.
6. The current source of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
the current source is configured such that the first selectable proportion and the
second selectable proportion are constrained to be substantially identical; and
the current source is configured such that the first and second selectable
20 proportions are selectable to be X to $1-X$, where X is a real non-negative number
less than or equal to 1.0.
7. The current source of claim 6, wherein:
the current source is configured such that, for two particular values of X , namely
 $X=0$ and $X=1$, only one of the first and second resistor banks contributes to the
25 current to be provided to the device under test.
8. A method of operating a current source, comprising:
a) configuring the current source such that both a first resistor network and a
second resistor network of the current source contribute to providing current to
an output of the current source;
30 b) adjusting a current control input to the current source to cause the provided
current at the output of the current source to change;

- 5 c) adjusting a resistor network control input to the current source such that the first resistor network does not contribute to providing current to the output of the current source and, while the first resistor network does not contribute to providing current to the output of the current source, modifying a resistance of the first resistor network;
- d) adjusting the resistor network control input to the current source such that the first resistor network again contributes to providing current to the output of the current source;
- e) repeating b);
- 10 f) adjusting the resistor network control input until the second resistor network does not contribute to providing current to the output of the current source and, while the second resistor network does not contribute to providing current to the output of the current source, modifying a resistance of the second resistor network;
- 15 g) repeating steps b) to f) to achieve a range of values of the current provided to the output of the current source.
9. A method of operating a current source, comprising:
- a) configuring the current source such that both a first resistor network and a second resistor network of the current source contribute to providing current to an output of the current source, wherein the first resistor network contributes substantially to providing current to the output of the current source and wherein the second resistor network contributes much less than substantially to providing current to the output of the current source;
- 20 b) adjusting a current control input to the current source to cause the provided current at the output of the current source to change;
- 25 c) adjusting a resistor network control input to the current source such that the second resistor network contributes substantially to providing current to the output of the current source and the first resistor network contribute much less than substantially to providing current to the output of the current source, and modifying a resistance of the first resistor network;
- 30 d) repeating b);
- e) adjusting the resistor network control input until the first resistor network contributes substantially to providing current to the output of the current

source and wherein the second resistor network contributes much less than substantially to providing current to the output of the current source; and modifying a resistance of the second resistor network;

- 5 f) repeating steps b) to e) to achieve a range of values of the current provided to the output of the current source.