

# A Multiplexing Ripple Cancellation LED Driver with True Single-Stage Power Conversion and Flicker-free Operation

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**Abstract**—although a single-stage off-line power LED driver can achieve low cost and high efficiency, the notorious double-line-frequency flicker issue with a single-stage LED driver limits its usage in high-quality lighting applications. To solve lighting flicker, as well as maintain a low cost and high efficiency, a Multiplexing Ripple Cancellation (MRC) LED driver is proposed in this paper. One switching cycle is divided into two intervals. During the first interval, the proposed LED driver operates as a conventional LED driver that transfers energy from AC input to LED output, performs power factor correction and generates the main output voltage. The main output voltage has a double-line-frequency ripple like in a conventional design. During the second interval, the proposed LED driver transfers energy from AC input again to generate an opposite ripple voltage to cancel the ripple voltage from the main output. In this way, the voltage across LED load is a DC to achieve flicker-free LED driving performance. More than 99% of the output power goes through one-time power conversion while less than 1% goes through two-time power conversion. A 7.5W experimental prototype had been built and tested to verify the design concept.

**Keywords**—Single stage, ripple cancellation, flick-free operation, multiplexing operation,

## I. INTRODUCTION

The light-emitting diode (LED) offers much higher efficacy than any other lighting devices and is one of the most promising lighting technologies. High quality LED light devices are more durable and provide comparable, if not better, light quality as other types of lighting. It has the potential to completely overtake other traditional light technologies, especially in residential applications. The global LED lighting market reached 26 billion U.S dollar in 2016 and is expected to reach 54 Billion U.S dollar by 2022, growing at a rate of around 13% between 2017 and 2022 [1].

A variety of research had been conducted to maintain a low cost, and higher efficiency as a single-stage LED driver while achieving flicker-free operation as a two-stage LED driver. The energy buffering technologies [4]-[7] had been proposed to balance energy difference between AC input and LED output with a bi-directional DC-DC converter. The two-stage integrated methods [8]-[11] had been proposed to share components between the first PFC stage and the second DC-DC stage, which can reduce component cost. The harmonic input currents injection method [12]-[14] had been proposed to minimize double-line-frequency imbalanced energy existing in a single-stage LED driver. Therefore, the ripple LED current is reduced to alleviate lighting flicker. The ripple cancellation method had been proposed in [15]-[20] to achieve flicker-free LED driving performance. The

energy channeling LED driver is proposed in [20]. One limitation with the energy channeling LED driver is restrained operation. The input power drop to zero as the result of performing power factor correction. The input power is not enough to maintain the ripple cancellation voltage during the input is close to zero. A Multiplexing Ripple Cancellation (MRC) LED driver is proposed in this paper. The way to generate the ripple cancellation voltage is made independent of the power factor correction operation, which removes the restraint of having limited input power to maintain the ripple cancellation voltage during the input voltage zero-crossing.

This remaining of this paper is organized as follows. Section II discusses the concept and operating principle of the proposed LED driver; Section III discusses the control strategy of the LED driver; Section IV discusses the design consideration of the proposed LED driver. The experimental result of the proposed LED driver is presented in section V. Finally, the paper is concluded at section VI.

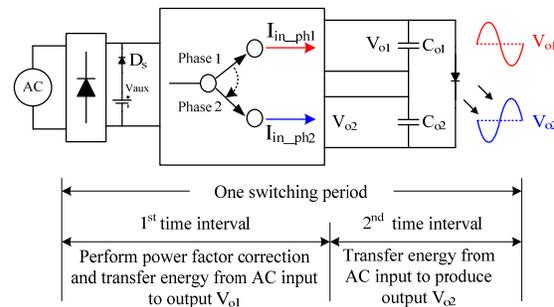


Fig. 1 Concept of the proposed multiplexing ripple cancellation LED driver

## II. CONCEPT AND OPERATING PRINCIPLE

Fig. 1 shows the operation concept of the proposed MRC LED driver. It operates in time multiplexing manner with one switching cycle being divided into two intervals, namely, the interval I and the interval II. During the time interval I, the power stage of the conceptual LED driver operates as a PFC converter. Energy is transferred from AC input to the main output  $V_{o1}$  and power factor correction is performed. During the interval II, it operates as a ripple cancellation converter. The energy used to maintain  $V_{o2}$  is also from the AC input. The energy transferred from AC input to both output  $V_{o1}$  and  $V_{o2}$  is in single-stage power conversion manner, which helps maintain a comparable high efficiency as a conventional single-stage LED driver. Fig. 2 shows a Buck-Boost topology based implementation of the MRC

LED driver. Fig. 3 shows one switching cycle operation of the MRC LED driver.

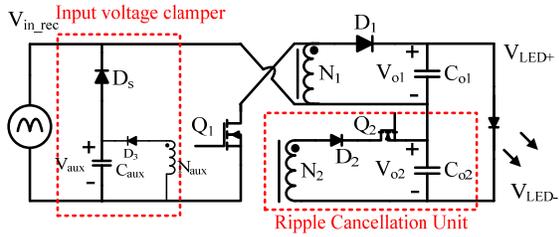


Fig. 2 Circuit implementation of the MRC LED driver based on Buck-Boost topology

The critical switching waveforms in one switching cycle are shown in Fig. 4. The following brief analysis explains how power factor correction is performed during time interval I operation. The switching current starts from zero at the beginning of the time interval I operation. The on time of the interval I operation,  $[t_0-t_1]$ , is a constant in a half line cycle. The interval II operation will not start until the switching current,  $I_{D1}$ , drops to zero. At the end of time interval II operation, switching current  $I_{D2}$  also drop to zero. The switching period is constant in every switching cycle. The detailed switching operation in each time interval will be discussed as follows.

#### During time interval $[t_0-t_1]$

A switching cycle starts at time  $t_0$  when the MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned on. The inductor is charged by the rectified AC input. The switching current, in winding  $N_1$ , starts rising from zero and increases linearly with the turn on time. The switching current in winding  $N_1$  (and  $Q_1$ ) peaks at time  $t_1$  right before  $Q_1$  is turned off and can be expressed as:

$$I_{Q1-t_1} = \frac{V_{in} \times (t_1 - t_0)}{L_{N1}} \quad (1)$$

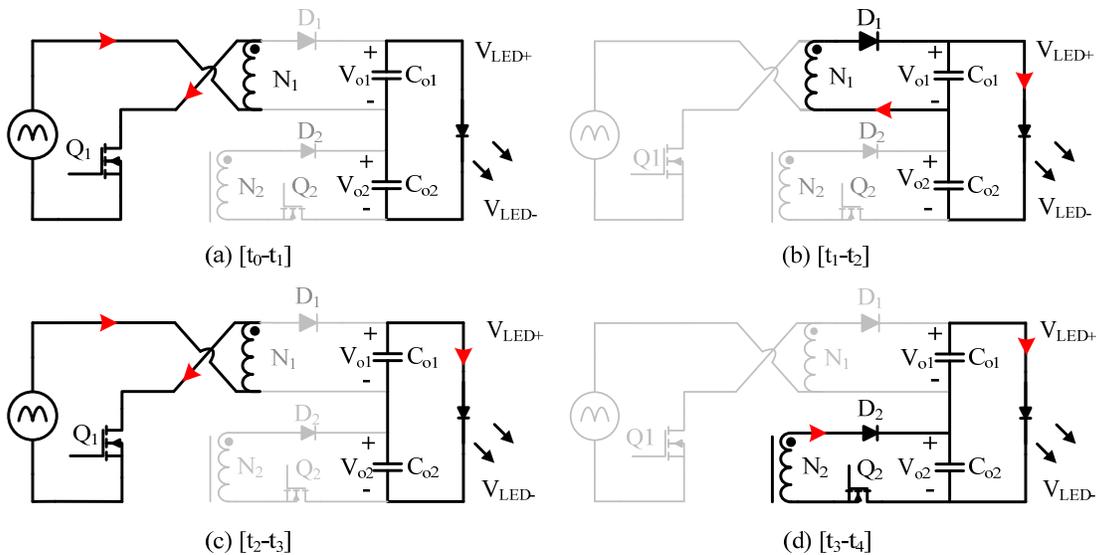


Fig. 3 One switching cycle operation of the proposed multiplexing ripple cancellation LED driver

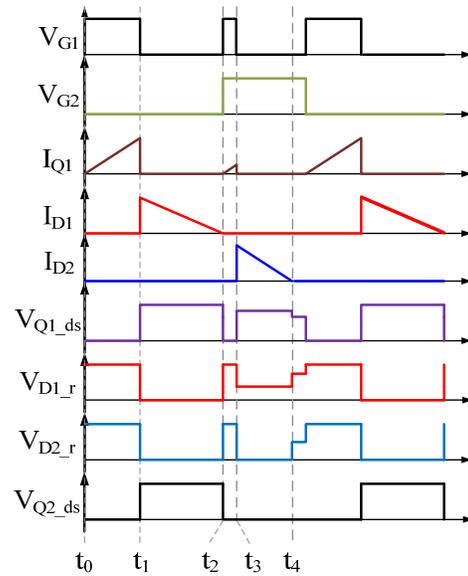


Fig. 4 Key switching current waveforms of the proposed MRC LED driver

The averaged current drawn from AC input during time interval I operation can be expressed as:

$$I_{in\_T1\_avg} = \frac{I_{Q1-t_1} \times (t_1 - t_0)}{2T_s} \quad (2)$$

Where in (2),  $I_{in\_T1\_avg}$  represents the averaged input current in a switching cycle during interval I operation. Further combining Eq. (1) and (2) yields:

$$I_{in\_T1\_avg} = \frac{V_{in} \times (t_1 - t_0)^2}{2 \times T_s \times L_{N1}} \quad (3)$$

As both the terms  $(t_1 - t_0)$  and  $T_s$  are constant in a half line cycle,  $I_{in\_T1\_avg}$  is therefore proportional to the input voltage. Because of the opposite winding orientation between  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ , both diodes  $D_1$ ,  $D_2$  are reversely biased and there is no current in winding  $N_2$ . The body diode of the MOSFET  $Q_2$  is forward biased. The voltage stresses on  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  during this time interval can be expressed as:

$$V_{D1[t_0-t_1]} = V_{o1} + V_{in} \quad (4)$$

$$V_{D2[t_0-t_1]} = V_{o2} + V_{in} \times \frac{N_2}{N_1} \quad (5)$$

#### During Time Interval $[t_1-t_2]$

As the MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned off at time  $t_1$ , the magnetic current in winding  $N_1$  is forced to conduct in diode  $D_1$ . The voltage across winding  $N_1$  is clamped to be the same as the output  $V_{o1}$  (ignoring the forward voltage drop of diode  $D_1$ ). The voltage across MOSFET  $Q_1$  is the sum of input voltage and output voltage  $V_{o1}$ , and is expressed as:

$$V_{Q1[t_1-t_2]} = V_{in} + V_{o1} \quad (6)$$

During this time interval, the energy stored in the inductor is transferred to the output  $V_{o1}$ . The magnetic current in winding  $N_1$  starts decreasing at time  $t_1$  and becomes zero at time  $t_2$ , which ends the interval I operation. One should note that, during this time interval, the voltage on winding  $N_2$ ,  $V_{N2}[t_1-t_2]$ , is designed to be higher than  $V_{o2}$  as shown below:

$$V_{N2[t_1-t_2]} = V_{o1} \times \frac{N_2}{N_1} > V_{o2} \quad (7)$$

Therefore, the diode  $D_2$  is forward biased while the body diode of  $Q_2$  is reversely biased. The voltage across the drain to source terminals of  $Q_2$  can be expressed as:

$$V_{Q2[t_1-t_2]} = V_{N2[t_1-t_2]} - V_{o2} = V_{o1} \times \frac{N_2}{N_1} - V_{o2} \quad (8)$$

#### During Time Interval $[t_2-t_3]$

The time interval II operation starts at time  $t_2$  and the MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned on again. The voltage stresses on these power components are the same as they are during the time interval  $[t_0-t_1]$ . The inductor current in MOSFET  $Q_1$  peaks at  $t_3$  again before  $Q_1$  is turned off. The switching current in  $Q_1$  at  $t_3$  is expressed as:

$$I_{Q1\_t3} = \frac{V_{in} \times (t_3 - t_2)}{L_{N1}} \quad (9)$$

The MOSFET  $Q_2$  is designed to be turned on at  $t_2$ . Theoretically, the MOSFET  $Q_2$  can be turned on anywhere within  $[t_2-t_3]$  without affecting the expected operation.

#### During Time Interval $[t_3-t_4]$

When the MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned off at  $t_3$ , the magnetic inductor current needs to find another path to continue the current flow. As  $Q_2$  is already on, both winding  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  provide current flowing paths. The turns ratio  $N_1:N_2$  in the proposed design forces the magnetic current to continue flowing in the winding  $N_2$  and the explanation is as follows.

If the magnetic current conducts in winding  $N_2$ , the voltage across the winding  $N_2$  is clamped at  $V_{o2}$  (with ignoring the forward voltage drop of  $D_2$ ). The voltage reflected on the winding  $N_1$  becomes:

$$V_{N1[t_3-t_4]} = V_{o2} \times \frac{N_2}{N_1} \quad (10)$$

Combining (14) and (17) yields:

$$V_{N1[t_3-t_4]} < V_{o1} \quad (11)$$

(18) Indicates that the voltage potential at the anode of  $D_1$  is smaller than the voltage potential at the cathode of  $D_1$ . Therefore, the diode  $D_1$  is reversely biased. Therefore, the above assumption is valid and the magnetic current only conducts in winding  $N_2$  during  $[t_3-t_4]$ . The inductor releases the stored energy to the output  $V_{o2}$  during the time interval  $[t_3-t_4]$ . The magnetic current in winding  $N_2$  starts decreasing from  $t_3$  and it drops to zero at time  $t_4$ , which ends the time interval II operation. There is a voltage falling on the MOSFET  $Q_1$  again, which can be expressed as:

$$V_{Q1[t_3-t_4]} = V_{in} + V_{o2} \times \frac{N_1}{N_2} \quad (12)$$

#### During Time Interval $[t_4-t_5]$

There is a small time interval  $[t_4-t_5]$  to maintain DCM operation. There is no active energy transfer during this time interval and the magnetic current in the inductor remains zero.

### III. CONTROL SCHEME

Fig. 5 shows the control diagram of the proposed Multiplex Ripple Cancellation LED driver. Two control loops are needed for the LED driver, namely the LED current feedback loop and the output  $V_{o2}$  voltage loop.

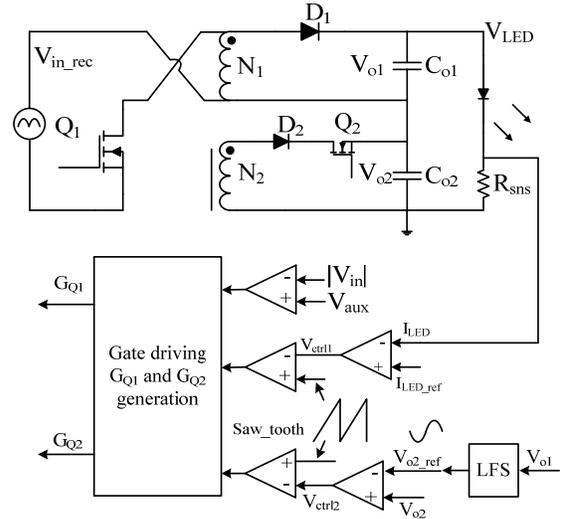


Fig. 5 Control diagram of the proposed MRC LED driver

To achieve LED current regulation, LED current is sensed and compared with its current reference. The compensated error signal,  $V_{ctrl1}$ , is compared with the saw-tooth signal to generate the gate driving signal for the

MOSFET  $Q_1$  during the interval I operation. Under steady state,  $V_{ctrl1}$  is a constant in a half line cycle. Therefore, the on time of  $Q_1$  during phase one,  $(t_1-t_0)$ , is constant. Under discontinuous conduction mode and Flyback topology, the interval I input current automatically follows the input voltage to perform the power factor correction [33]. When the sensed input current is not equal to the LED current reference,  $V_{ctrl1}$  will be changed automatically by the feedback loop. Therefore,  $(t_1-t_0)$  and the RMS input current will change. The change with RMS input current lead to change of the input power and the output voltage  $V_{o1}$ .  $V_{o1}$  will settle to the value that produce exact the LED current required by its reference. It should note that the averaged voltage of  $V_{o2}$  is a constant, and it is not a part of the LED current regulation loop.

To achieve ripple cancellation, the output voltage  $V_{o1}$  is sensed by the low-frequency sensing (LFS) circuit to extract the double-line-frequency ripple voltage. The sensed ripple voltage becomes the reference voltage of  $V_{o2}$ ,  $V_{o2\_ref}$ . The output voltage  $V_{o2}$  is sensed and compared with this reference. The compensated error voltage  $V_{ctrl2}$  is compared with the saw tooth signal to produce the gate driving signal of  $Q_1$  during the interval II operation. With a well-controlled regulation loop, the output  $V_{o2}$  tightly follows the reference voltage and produce an opposite ripple voltage to cancel the ripple from  $V_{o1}$ . There is also another logic that controls the gate driving of  $Q_1$ . When  $|V_{in}| < V_{aux}$ , the gate driving of  $Q_1$  during interval I operation is disabled. In this way, no energy is delivered to the output  $V_{o1}$  during this period, minimizing the amount of energy going through two times power conversion.

Fig. 6 shows how to generate the gate driving signals for  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$ .

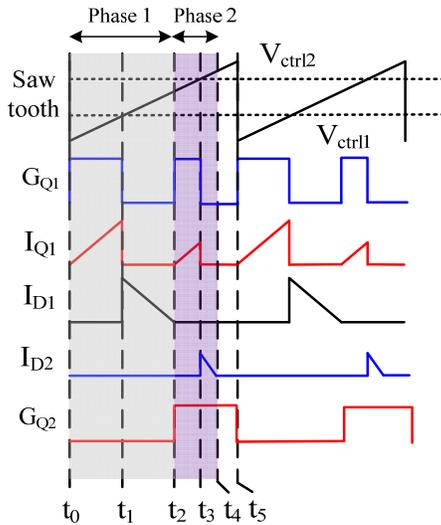


Fig. 6 Gate driving generating scheme for  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$

#### IV. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

EnergyStar requires power factor implementation for LED drivers with greater than 5W output. In the proposed design, the interval II input current introduces distortion, which inevitably affects the power factor performance. A model to simulate the average input current of the proposed

LED driver has been built. The power factor performance simulation is based on 110Vrms input, and the results are shown in TABLE 1. To normalize the result, the voltage ripple of  $V_{o1}$  is presented as the ratio of  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED}$ , where  $V_{o1\_rip}$  is the ripple voltage amplitude of  $V_{o1}$ . Please note, the DC amplitude of  $V_{o2}$ ,  $V_{o2\_DC}$ , is designed based on the minimum requirement to be just enough to maintain  $V_{o2}$  above zero. Therefore, in the proposed design, there is  $V_{o2\_DC} = V_{o1\_rip} = V_{o2\_rip}$ . In this way, the averaged power delivered to the  $V_{o2}$  is minimized and so is the input current distortion. In a real design,  $V_{o2\_DC}$  can be designed slightly higher than  $V_{o1\_rip}$  to provide reasonable margin.

TABLE 1 SIMULATED POWER FACTOR PERFORMANCE OF THE PROPOSED LED DRIVER UNDER 110VRMS INPUT

$V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED}$	5%	10%	20%	30%	40%
Power Factor ( $V_{aux} = 20V$ )	0.99	0.98	0.93	0.85	0.7
Power Factor ( $V_{aux} = 30V$ )	0.99	0.99	0.96	0.90	0.78
Power Factor ( $V_{aux} = 40V$ )	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.92	0.84
Power Factor ( $V_{aux} = 50V$ )	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.94	0.88

As shown in TABLE 1, the power factor of the proposed LED driver is reduced when the ripple ratio  $V_{rip\_vo1} / V_{LED}$  is increased. Under the same ripple ratio, the power factor is improved when  $V_{aux}$  is increased from 20V to 50V. The improvement is not obvious when the ripple ratio is low, for example when the ripple ratio  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED}$  is 5% or 10%. The improvement becomes obvious when the ripple ratio is high. For example, when  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED} = 40\%$ , the power factor is improved from 0.7 when  $V_{aux} = 20V$  to 0.88 when  $V_{aux} = 50V$ .

In addition to the power factor requirement, IEC61000-3-2 class C sets limit on the input harmonic currents for lighting devices with greater than 75W power. The AC input current during interval II operation contributes to the additional harmonic currents. The input harmonic currents are simulated based on 110Vrms input, 50V, 1.5A, 75W output and the results are presented in Fig. 7.

Fig. 7(a) shows the input harmonic currents with  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED} = 5\%$  and  $V_{aux} = 20V$ . Each order of input harmonic current is well below the limit set by IEC-61000-3-2, class C. Fig. 7(b) shows the input harmonic currents when  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED} = 10\%$ . Each order of input harmonic current is still below the limit. However, the 21th, 23th order input harmonic currents are already very close to the 3% limit. Fig. 7(c) shows the input harmonic currents when  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED} = 20\%$ . The input harmonic currents from the second interval input current contribute significantly to the overall harmonic current. As a result, multiple harmonic currents exceed the limit.

Above simulation results show that the input harmonic currents in Fig. 7(a) and Fig. 7(b) meet the requirement from IEC-61000-3-2 class C while the input harmonic currents in Fig.7(c) exceeds the limit. In general, to reduce the input current harmonic currents, it is preferred to have a small  $V_{o1\_rip} / V_{LED}$ .

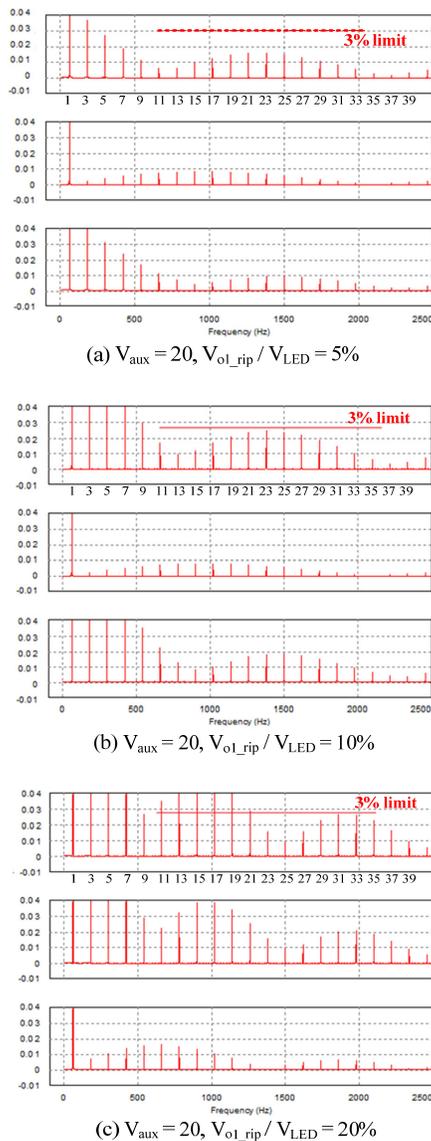


Fig. 7 Input harmonic currents when  $V_{in} = 110V_{rms}$ ,  $V_{LED} = 50V$ ,  $I_{LED} = 1.5A$ ,  $V_{aux} = 20V$

### V. EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATIONS

To verify the proposed MRC LED driver, a 7.5W experimental prototype had been designed based on the procedure presented in previous section, built and tested. TABLE 2 gives the design specification and the circuit parameter of the experimental prototype.

TABLE 2 DESIGN SPECIFICATION AND CIRCUIT PARAMETER

Design Specification	
Input Voltage	89Vrms – 132Vrms
$V_{LED}$	~ 50V
$I_{LED}$	0.15A
Circuit Parameter	
Coupled inductor	$N_1: N_2 = 8:1$ , $L_{N1} = 1.25mH$ EE16 core
Main MOSFET $Q_1$	2SK2803 (450V 3A)
Main output diode $D_1$	LQA06T300 (300V 6A)
MOSFET $Q_2$	ZXMN4A06GTA (40V 5A)

Output diode $D_2$	MBR340T3G (40V 4A)
Capacitor $C_{aux}$	ECA-1HM470B (47 $\mu$ F, 50V)
Output capacitor $C_{o1}$	EKZE101ELL271MK30S (270 $\mu$ F, 100V)
Output capacitor $C_{o2}$	CL21A226KOQNNNE (22 $\mu$ F, 16V)
LED current sensing resistor	KNP100JR-73-0R5 (0.5 ohm)
Controller	PIC16F1578-I/SS
Switching frequency $f_s$	20kHz

Fig. 8 shows the ripple cancellation waveforms of the proposed MRC LED driver. The double-line-frequency ripple voltage on the output  $V_{o1}$  is 2V peak to peak. The output  $V_{o2}$  generate an opposite ripple voltage to cancel the ripple voltage of  $V_{o1}$ . In this way, the double-line-frequency ripple LED current is greatly reduced. The double-line-frequency ripple LED current is measured to be 16mA peak to peak, which means 20mA peak and the ripple current is 5.3% of the average LED current.

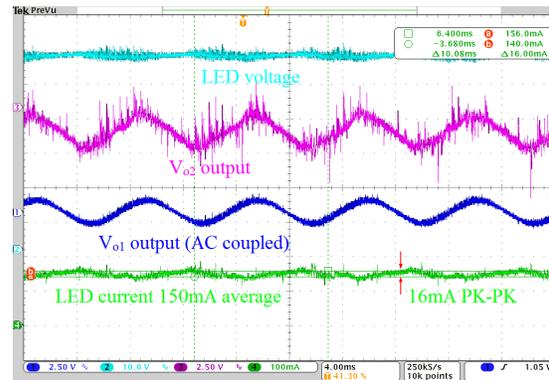


Fig.8 Ripple cancelation waveforms of the proposed MRC LED driver

Fig. 9 shows the gate driving and the switching current waveforms of the MRC LED driver. A switching cycle starts at time  $t_0$  when the MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned on. The magnetic current in winding  $N_1$  (and  $Q_1$ ) starts rising from zero. The magnetic current peaks at  $t_1$  when  $Q_1$  is turned off and it continues flowing in  $D_1$ . The magnetic current drops to zero before the time  $t_2$ , which ends the interval I operation. The MOSFET  $Q_1$  is turned on at  $t_2$  again and the magnetic current in winding  $N_1$  starts increasing from zero again. The current peaks at  $t_3$  when  $Q_1$  is turned off. The magnetic current then commutes from winding  $N_1$  to winding  $N_2$  and continues its flow in diode  $D_2$  and MOSFET  $Q_2$ . The current in winding  $N_2$  drops to zero at time  $t_4$ , which ends the interval II operation.

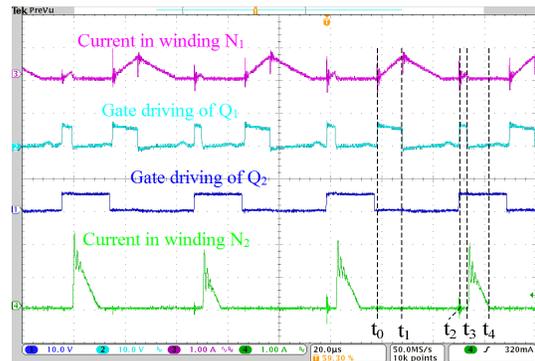


Fig. 9 Key switching waveform of the MRC LED driver

Fig. 10 shows the voltage stresses of  $Q_1$ ,  $Q_2$  and  $D_2$  in the experimental prototype. The input current waveform and the output voltage waveforms are also included to reflect full load operating condition. The maximum voltage of  $Q_1$  is around 190V. The voltage stresses of  $Q_1$  in the LED driver is the same as it is in a conventional Buck-Boost LED driver. The voltage across the anode of diode  $D_2$  and the source of  $Q_2$  is measured. When the voltage is positive, it indicates  $D_2$  is forward biased while the body diode of  $Q_2$  is reversely biased. Vice versa, it indicates  $D_2$  is reversely biased while the body diode of  $Q_2$  is forward biased. Therefore, as shown from Fig. 10, the maximum voltage on  $D_2$  is around 6V while the maximum voltage on  $Q_2$  is around 20V.

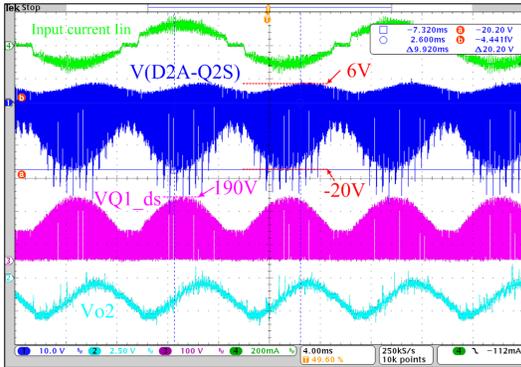


Fig. 10 Power components voltage stresses of the MRC LED driver

Fig. 11 shows the efficiency of the proposed MRC LED driver with and the efficiency of a conventional single-stage Buck-Boost LED driver. The efficiency of MRC prototype is 1% lower than the efficiency of a conventional LED driver. This is due to extra switching loss with the second interval operation. Overall, this is a very small price to pay when flicker-free LED driving performance is achieved. On the other side, to achieve flicker-free LED driving performance and the same efficiency with a two-stage LED driver, the second stage DC-DC converter needs to achieve 99% efficiency, which is not realistic to achieve with a conventional design. Assuming the second stage Buck converter achieves 95% efficiency, the final efficiency of the two-stage LED driver will be  $85\% \times 0.95 = 80.7\%$ , which will be significantly lower than the proposed LED driver.

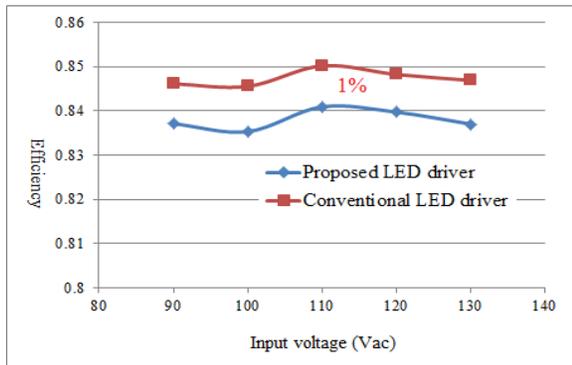


Fig. 11 Efficiency of the experimental prototype LED driver with/without Ripple Cancellation Unit under full load condition

Fig. 12 shows the power factor correction performance of the proposed MRC LED driver. Around 0.98PF has been achieved under full load condition. Fig. 13 shows the input

current harmonics of the proposed LED driver. The experimental results show that the converter is able to meet the requirements outlined by IEC 61000 3 2 class C, however, the 9th and 11th order harmonic currents are very close to the limit. It is expected that the input current harmonics can be further reduced with an optimized input filter design.

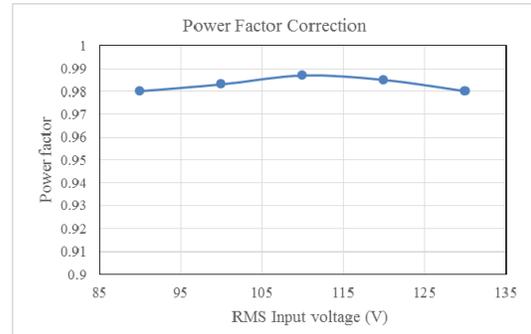


Fig. 12 Power Factor Correction performance of the MRC LED driver

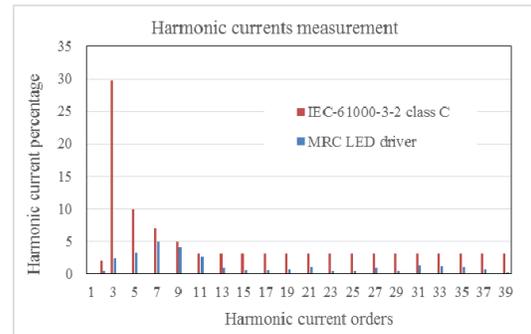


Fig. 13 Input current harmonics of the proposed MRC LED driver under 110Vrms input

Fig. 14 shows the photo of the experimental prototype.



Fig. 14 7.5W MRC LED Driver experimental prototype

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, a Multiplexing Ripple Cancellation LED driver is proposed in this paper to achieve flicker-free LED driving, high efficiency and a high power factor correction. The power circuit is operated in time multiplexing manner with two intervals in one switching cycle. The operation in the interval I performs power factor correction and transfers energy from the AC input to the LED load. The operation in the interval II produced the opposite ripple voltage to achieve ripple cancellation. The proposed MRC LED driver also achieves true single-stage power conversion, improving efficiency over previous ripple cancellation LED driver. The

LED driver can maintain a low cost by minimizing additional components, making it a very competitive solution for cost-sensitive low power designs. A 7.5W experimental prototype had been built and tested to verify the operation of the LED driver. The experimental prototype achieves 0.98PF, 5.3% of double-line-frequency ripple LED current performance while the efficiency is only 1% efficiency lower than a conventional Buck-Boost LED driver.

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