Sensors, Signals and Noise

COURSE OUTLINE

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- Sensors and associated electronics

1/f Noise and High-Pass Filters 1

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- 1/f Noise Filtering

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- Correlated Double Sampling with Filtered Baseline (CDS-FB)
- Correlated Double Filtering (CDF)

1/f Noise features

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1/f Noise

Random fluctuations with power spectral density

$$S(f) \propto \frac{1}{|f|}$$

- first reported in 1925 as «flicker noise» in electronic vacuum tubes
- ubiquitous, observed in all electronic devices
- with very different intensity in different devices: very strong in MOSFETs; moderate in Bipolar Transistors BJTs; moderate in carbon resistors; ultra-weak in metal-film resistors; etc.
- observed in many cases also outside electronics: cell membrane potential; insulin level in diabetic blood; brownian motion; solar activity; intensity of white dwarf stars; ocean current flux; frequency of atomic clocks; ... and many others
- Basic **distinction** between 1/f and white noise:

time span of interdependence between samples for white noise: samples are uncorrelated even at short time distance for 1/f noise: samples are strongly correlated even at long time distance

1/f Noise features

• The real observed power density at low frequency is often not exactly but rather $\propto \frac{1}{|f|^{\alpha}}$ with α close to unity, i.e. 0,8 < α <1,2

anyway the behavior of such noise is **well approximated by 1/f** density

- 1/f noise arises from physical processes that generate a random superposition of elementary pulses with random pulse duration ranging from very short to very long.
- E.g. in MOSFETs 1/f noise arises because:
- a) carriers traveling in the conduction channel are randomly captured by local trap levels in the oxide
- b) trapped carriers are later released with a random delay
- c) the level mean delay strongly depends on how far-off is from the silicon surface is the level in the oxide
- d) trap levels are distributed from very near to very far from silicon, delays are correspondingly distributed from very short to very long

 $\propto \frac{1}{f}$



1/f Noise specification

• Spectral density
$$S_f(f) = \frac{P}{f}$$
 noise power $\overline{n_f^2} = \int_0^{+\infty} \frac{P}{f} df$ (with unilateral S_f)

• circuits and devices have both 1/f noise S_f and white noise S_B



• S_f is specified in relative terms referred to the white noise S_B by specifing the «corner frequency» f_c at which $S_f = S_B$

1/f Noise specification

• The **1/f** noise corner frequency f_c is so defined by

$$\frac{P}{|f_c|} = S_B \qquad \text{hence} \qquad P = S_B f_c$$

NB: the **higher** is frequency f_c the **stronger** is the role of 1/f noise and for a given S_B , the higher is the intensity P



Typical values for low-noise voltage amplifiers

• S_B a few 10⁻¹⁸ V²/Hz

$$\sqrt{S_B}$$
 a few $\frac{nV}{\sqrt{Hz}}$

• f_c 10Hz to 10kHz

1/f Noise band-limits and power

1/f Noise bandlimits and power

The ideal 1/f noise spectrum runs from f = 0 to f $\rightarrow \infty$ and has divergent power $\overline{n_f^2} \rightarrow \infty$ (recall that also the ideal white spectrum has $\overline{n_B^2} \rightarrow \infty$)

$$\overline{n_f^2} = \int_0^\infty \frac{P}{f} \, df \to \infty$$

A real 1/f noise spectrum has span limited at both ends and is not divergent.

If there is **wide spacing** between the high-frequency and low-frequency limitations they can be **approximated by sharp cutoff** at low frequency f_i and high frequency $f_s >> f_i$ and the noise power can be evaluated as *

$$\overline{n_f^2} \approx \int_{f_i}^{f_s} \frac{P}{f} df = P \ln\left(\frac{f_s}{f_i}\right) = S_B f_c \ln\left(\frac{f_s}{f_i}\right)$$



The actual 1/f bandlimits f_s and/or f_i of given filter types will be illustrated later.

• Beware !

ONLY if $f_s >> f_i$ the sharp cutoff gives a **GOOD APPROXIMATION** of the noise power (we are considering a **rectangle** as shape of the cutoff in the integral calculation)

1/f Noise bandlimits and power

In cases with widely spaced bandlimits $f_s >> f_i$ the 1/f noise power $\overline{n_f^2}$ is

$$\overline{n_f^2} \approx \int_{f_i}^{f_s} \frac{P}{f} df = S_B f_c \ln\left(\frac{f_s}{f_i}\right)$$

NOTE THAT:

- n_f² is divergent for f_s → ∞ (like white noise).
 A limit at high frequency is necessary for avoiding divergence, but in real cases a finite limit always exists.
- $\overline{n_f^2}$ is divergent for $f_i \rightarrow 0$ (like random-walk noise 1/f²). A limit at low frequency is necessary for avoiding divergence, but we will see that in real cases there is always a finite limit
- $\overline{n_f^2}$ depends on the ratio f_s/f_i and NOT the absolute values fs and f_i

RENESAS

ISL28134

5V Ultra Low Noise, Zero Drift Rail-to-Rail Precision Op Amp

FN6957 Rev 6.00 October 14, 2014

The ISL28134 is a single, chopper-stabilized zero drift operational amplifier optimized for single and dual supply operation from 2.25V to 6.0V and \pm 1.125V and \pm 3.0V. The ISL28134 uses auto-correction circuitry to provide very low input offset voltage, drift and a reduction of the 1/f noise corner below 0.1Hz. The ISL28134 achieves ultra low offset voltage, offset temperature drift, wide gain bandwidth and railto-rail input/output swing while minimizing power consumption.

The ISL28134 is ideal for amplifying the sensor signals of analog front-ends that include pressure, temperature, medical, strain gauge and inertial sensors down to the μ V levels.

The ISL28134 can be used over standard amplifiers with high stability across the industrial temperature range of -40°C to +85°C and the full industrial temperature range of -40°C to +125°C. The ISL28134 is available in an industry standard pinout SOIC and SOT-23 packages.

Applications

- · Medical instrumentation
- Sensor gain amps
- · Precision low drift, low frequency ADC drivers
- Precision voltage reference buffers
- Thermopile, thermocouple, and other temperature sensors front-end amplifiers
- · Inertial sensors
- · Process control systems
- · Weight scales and strain gauge sensors

Features

- · Rail-to-rail inputs and outputs
- CMRR at V_{CM} = 0.1V beyond V_S 135dB, typ

- Packaging
- Single: SOIC, SOT-23

Related Literature

- AN1641, "ISL28134SOICEVAL1Z Evaluation Board User's Guide"
- <u>AN1560</u>, "Making Accurate Voltage Noise and Current Noise Measurements on Operational Amplifiers Down to 0.1Hz"

DATASHEET

1/f Noise bandlimits and power

$$\overline{n_f^2} \approx \int_{f_i}^{f_s} \frac{P}{f} df = S_B f_c \ln\left(\frac{f_s}{f_i}\right)$$

Note 1: $\overline{n_f^2}$ is **SLOWLY** divergent for $f_i \rightarrow 0$ or $f_s \rightarrow \infty$ **Logarithmic** dependence

Note 2: reasonably approximate bandlimits are adequate for estimating n_f^2 it is not necessary to know very precisely f_s and f_i

EXAMPLE: 1/f noise with $\sqrt{P} = \sqrt{S_B f_C} = 100 nV$

filtered with $f_i = 1 kHz$ and $f_s = 10 kHz$ ($f_s / f_i = 10$)

$$\sqrt{\overline{n_{f,a}^2}} = \sqrt{2.3} \sqrt{S_B f_c} = 151 nV$$



filtered with $f_i = 1$ Hz and $f_s = 10$ MHz ($f_s / f_i = 10^7$, i.e. x 10^6 higher)

$$\sqrt{\overline{n_{f,b}^2}} = \sqrt{7 \cdot 2,3} \sqrt{S_B f_c} = 401 nV$$
 (just **x 2,7 higher**)

1/f Noise Filtering

1/f Noise filtering and power

The **band-limits of a filter for 1/f noise** are well visualized in the **linear-log diagram** of the weighting function $|W(\ln f)|^2$

$$\overline{n_f^2} = S_B f_c \int_0^\infty |W(f)|^2 \frac{df}{f} = S_B f_c \int_\infty^\infty |W(f)|^2 d(\ln f)$$

(beware: it's NOT A BODE diagram: the vertical scale is linear !!)

• 1/f noise: $\overline{n_f^2} \propto$ area (integral) of $|W|^2$ plot in logarithmic frequency scale

which is different from the case of

• white noise: $\overline{n_B^2} \propto$ area (integral) of $|\mathbf{W}|^2$ plot in linear frequency scale

In both cases the noise power depends mainly on the **frequency span covered** by $|\mathbf{W}|^2$, delimited by upper and lower bounds in frequency. However, the frequency span is **measured differently** :

- for white noise, by the difference of the bounds
- for 1/f noise, by the logarithmic difference, i.e. by the ratio of the bounds

Noise bandlimits: RC lowpass plus CR highpass



Simple equivalent weighting function is **rectangular** with area and height equal to the true weighting $|W(f)|^2$

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Ivan Rech

Intrinsic High-Pass Filtering by Correlated Double Sampling CDS

Intrinsic High-Pass Filtering

In all real cases, even with DC coupled electronics weighting is inherently **NOT extended** down to **zero frequency** because an intrinsic high-pass filtering is present in any real operation.

The intrinsic filtering action arises because:

a) operation is **started at some time before** the acquisition

of the measure

- b) operation is **started from zero** value
- **EXAMPLE:** measurement of amplitude of the output signal

of a DC amplifier or simply the use of a scale.



Zero-setting is mandatory: the baseline voltage is preliminary adjusted to zero, or it is

measured, recorded and then subtracted from the measured signal.

It may be done a long time before the signal measurements (e.g. when the amplifier is switched on) or repeated before each measurement; it may be done manually or automated, but it must be done anyway.

Zero-setting produces a high-pass filtering: let us analyze why and how

Zero-setting by Correlated Double Sampling (CDS)

Baseline sample is subtracted from signal sample, **both** acquired with **instant** sampling



At $\omega T \ll 1$ a **low frequency cutoff** is produced

$$|W_B(\omega)|^2 \approx \omega^2 T^2$$
 (for x << 1 it is sinx $\approx x$ so 4 * $\frac{\omega T}{2}$ * $\frac{\omega T}{2}$)

CDS vs. CR High-Pass Filter: Cut-Off

Baseline subtraction with delay T $|W_B(\omega)|^2 = 4 \sin^2 \left(\frac{\omega T}{2}\right)$ at low-frequency $\omega \ll 1/T$ $|W_B(\omega)|^2 \approx \omega^2 T^2$ High-Pass CR filter (differentiator) $|W_{CR}(\omega)|^{2} = \frac{\omega^{2}R^{2}C^{2}}{1+\omega^{2}R^{2}C^{2}}$ at low-frequency $\omega \ll 1/RC$ $|W_{CR}(\omega)|^{2} \approx \omega^{2}R^{2}C^{2}$



BODE DIAGRAM highlights the low-freq cutoff

Examples with equal cutoff T=RC plotted for T=1

CDS vs. CR High-Pass Filter: White Noise

CDS vs. CR High-Pass Filter: White Noise



LIN –LIN DIAGRAM (T=RC=1)

white noise power \propto area of $|W|^2$

$$\overline{n_{White}^2} = S_B \int_0^\infty |W(f)|^2 df$$

White noise $\overline{n_B^2}$ limited also by a low-pass f_s , but with $f_s >> 1/T$ and $f_s >> 1/RC$

$$\overline{n_B^2} = S_B \int_0^{J_S} |W(f)|^2 df \qquad \text{CDS:} \quad \overline{n_B^2} = 2 S_B f_S \qquad \text{CR:} \quad \overline{n_B^2} \approx S_B f_S$$

CDS: $|W_B|^2$ oscillates around 2; its area is **exactly the same** as for a constant $|W_B|^2 = 2$

CR: $|W_{CR}|^2$ has a cutoff at low frequency $f < f_i = 1/4$ RC; at higher frequency it is $|W_{CR}|^2 \approx 1$

Therefore, for white noise the output power of the CDS is **double of the unfiltered noise** and approximately double of the filtered output of the CR (actually even more than double !)

Double White noise power, as intuitive because:

- 1. white noise is acquired twice, in the baseline sampling and in the signal sampling.
- 2. The two noise samples are uncorrelated, hence their power is quadratically added.

Filtering Band-Limited White Noise by CDS

Time-domain analysis gives further insight:

$$\overline{n_B^2} = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} R_{xx}(\tau) \quad k_{wwB}(\tau) d\tau$$



CDS weighting function

Autocorrelation of CDS weighting function

Autocorrelation of band-limited white noise

$$R_{xx}(\tau) = \overline{n_x^2} e^{-\frac{|\tau|}{T_n}}$$

 T_n noise autocorrelation time

Filtering band-limited White Noise by CDS



• Noise with **very short correlation** time (i.e. very high band-limit) is **doubled**:

if
$$T_n \ll T$$
 we have $\overline{n_B^2} \approx 2\overline{n_x^2}$

Noise with long correlation time (i.e. very low band-limit) is strongly attenuated:

if
$$T_n \gg T$$
 we have $\overline{n_B^2} \approx \overline{n_x^2} \cdot 2 \frac{T}{T_n} \ll \overline{n_x^2}$

Time-domain analysis shows how with band-limited white noise the output noise power of CDS is **double of the input noise.** Let's check with a standard CR..

Filtering band-limited White Noise by CR



Filtering band-limited White Noise by CR



- Noise with very short correlation time (i.e. very high band-limit) is practically passed as it is, not doubled as for CDS: if $T_n \ll T_F$ we have $\overline{n_R^2} \approx \overline{n_r^2}$
- Noise with long correlation time (i.e. very low band-limit) is strongly attenuated at half the level of CDS: if $T_n \gg T_F$ we have $\overline{n_B^2} \approx \overline{n_x^2} \cdot \frac{T_F}{T} \ll \overline{n_x^2}$

CDS vs. CR High-Pass Filter: 1/f Noise

CDS vs. CR High-Pass Filter: 1/f noise



1/f noise power $\overline{n_f^2}$ limited also by a low-pass f_s , but with $f_s >> 1/T$ ($f_s >> 1/RC$)

$$\overline{n_f^2} = \int_0^{f_S} |W(f)|^2 \frac{S_B f_C}{f} df = S_B f_C \int_0^{f_S} |W(f)|^2 d(\ln f)$$

At low frequency f << 1/T the $|W_B|^2$ and $|W_{CR}|^2$ have the same cutoff (with T=RC). At higher frequency W_{CR} is constant $|W_{CR}|^2 \approx 1$ whereas the $|W_B|^2$ oscillates around a mean value 2, so that :

$$\int_0^{f_S} |W_B(f)|^2 \ d(\ln f) \approx 2 \ \int_0^{f_S} |W_{CR}(f)|^2 \ d(\ln f)$$

Zero-setting by CDS: conclusions

- Zero-setting by correlated double sampling (CDS) produces a high-pass filtering action that limits the power of 1/f noise.
- The interval T between zero setting and measure in most real cases is quite long (from a few seconds to several minutes) so that the high-pass band-limit *f*_{if} is quite low. This is a main drawback: the filtering is not very effective since the 1/f noise power is limited just to a moderately low level, which may be higher than that of white noise.
- Further drawback: with respect to CR high-pass filter with equal bandlimit f_{if} the output noise power is approximately double.

Correlated Double Sampling with Filtered Baseline CDS-FB

Correlated Double Sampling with Filtered Baseline CDS-FB

- Baseline sampling is intended to acquire the contributions of the low-frequency components that we want subtract from the measurement.
- However, instant sampling acquires all frequency components at low and high frequency; by subtracting them all, we double the noise passed above the CDS cutoff.
- Remedy: modify baseline sampling for acquiring only the low-frequency components; that is, sample with a low-pass weighting function $w_F(t)$ with band-limit f_{Fn} , which includes only the frequencies to be subtracted.

Example: noise with upper bandlimit f_s and baseline acquired by a Gated Integrator with narrower filtering band $f_{fn} << f_s$ (recall $f_{fn} = 1/2T_F$ with gate duration T_F)



NB: we still consider cases with **long interval** $T_P >> T_F$ from zero-setting to measurement

CDS-FB : Cut-off and Noise Filtering

$$W_{BI}(\omega) = F[\delta(t) - w_F(t+T)] = 1 - e^{i\omega T} W_F(\omega)$$

since $W_F(\omega) = \operatorname{sin} c\left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right)$ is real and $\cos \omega T = \frac{1}{2}(e^{i\omega T} + e^{-i\omega T})$ and $\sin \omega T = \frac{1}{2i}(e^{i\omega T} - e^{-i\omega T})$

$$W_{BI}(\omega) = 1 - W_F(\omega) \cos \omega T - iW_F(\omega) \sin \omega T$$

$$|W_{BI}(\omega)|^2 = 1 + W_F^2(\omega) - 2W_F(\omega) \cos \omega T$$

At low frequency ($f \ll 1/T$) it is $W_F(f) \approx 1$ and W_{BI} has a high-pass cutoff equivalent to a CR differentiator with RC=T

$$|W_B(\omega)|^2 \approx \omega^2 T^2 = \omega^2 \left(T_P + \frac{T_F}{2}\right)^2 \qquad f_{if} \approx \frac{1}{2\pi T} = \frac{1}{2\pi \left(T_P + \frac{T_F}{2}\right)} \quad \text{cutoff free}$$

quency

- At high **frequency above the GI low-pass cutoff** $(f >> f_n = 1/2T_F)$ it is $|W_F(f)| \approx 0$ so that $|W_{RI}(f)|^2 \approx 1$
- In the intermediate range $(1/T << f << 1/2T_F)$ it is roughly $W_F(f) \approx 1$ so that roughly it is ٠ $|W_{BI}(f)|^2 \approx 2(1 - \cos 2\pi fT)$. In this range the average value is about $|W_{BI}(f)|^2 \approx 2$, hence we can denote it as double-noise range

CDS-FB : Cut-off and Noise Filtering



Example of CDS-FB with $T_P = 101$ and $T_F = 2$

for comparison, a CR filter with equal cutoff $RC = T = T_P + T_F$ is reported

CDS-FB : output noise power

$$\overline{n^2} = \int_0^{f_s} S(f) |W_{BI}(\omega)|^2 df = \int_0^{f_s} S(f) [1 + W_F^2 - 2W_F \cos 2\pi fT] df$$

By approximating W_{BI} as outlined, the noise power can be approximately evaluated

1/f noise
$$\overline{n_{f,BI}^2} \approx S_B f_C \ln\left(\frac{f_S}{f_{if}}\right) + S_B f_C \ln\left(\frac{f_{Fn}}{f_{if}}\right)$$

white noise
$$\overline{n_{B,BI}^2} \approx S_B(f_S - f_i) + S_B(f_{Fn} - f_i) \approx S_B f_S + S_B f_{Fn}$$

In **CDS-FB the noise-doubling effect is strongly reduced** with respect to the simple CDS: it occurs only in the range from the low-frequency cutoff to the GI filtering band-limit.

In cases where the GI band-limit is much smaller than the noise band-limit ($f_S >> f_{Fn}$) the effect of noise doubling is practically negligible

$$\overline{n_{f,BI}^2} \approx S_B f_C \ln\left(\frac{f_S}{f_{if}}\right)$$

$$n_{B,BI}^2 \approx S_B f_S$$

Correlated Double Filtering CDF

Correlated Double Filtering CDF

Normally we always use a LPF to limit the filter the signal and limit the bandwidth of the amplifier. The formula is still correct, also adding a LPF, if $f_S >> f_{Fn}$

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What happen if f_s is comparable with f_{Fn}?
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- In various cases of pulse-amplitude measurements, filtering the signal by gated integrator (GI) is quite efficient for the white noise component
- We can modify the CDS-FB by subtracting from the GI acquisition of the pulse another GI acquisition over an equal interval before the pulse to limit the 1/f
- This approach has the same conceptual foundation as CDS, but has the two samples filtered by the GI: it is therefore called «Correlated Double Filtering» CDF
- The approach can be extended to cases where a constant-parameter low-pass filter LPF is employed for filtering the white noise component and a 1/f component is also present

Correlated Double Filtering CDF



CDF weighting = convolution of CDS weighting with LPF weighting

$$w_{DF}(\alpha) = w_{DS}(\alpha) * w_F(\alpha)$$

Weighting in frequency by CDF

Since in time domain in frequency domain it is for noise computation and since

we have

$$w_{DF}(\alpha) = w_{DS}(\alpha) * w_F(\alpha)$$
$$W_{DF}(\omega) = W_{DS}(\omega) \cdot W_F(\omega)$$
$$|W_{DF}|^2 = |W_{DS}|^2 \cdot |W_F|^2$$
$$|W_{DS}|^2 = 2(1 - \cos\omega T) = 4\sin^2(\omega T/2)$$

$$|W_{DF}|^2 = 2(1 - \cos \omega T) \cdot |W_F|^2 = 4\sin^2\left(\frac{\omega T}{2}\right) \cdot |W_F|^2$$

The main features of CDS reflect the fact that it is a combination of CDS and LPF :

- 1. The LPF cuts the noise at high frequencies with its LPF band-limit f_F
- 2. The **CDS cuts the noise at low frequencies** with its HPF band-limit $f_{iD} \approx 1/2\pi$ T
- 3. The **CDS enhances the noise in the passband between the band-limits** (with enhancement factor roughly 2)

Weighting in frequency by CDF with GI

The previous formula is valid for ANY $w_F(\alpha)$. EXAMPLE: Let's apply the formula to the use of a Gated Integrator and T=T_F



 $w_F(\alpha) = rect_{T_F}(\alpha)$

LPF weighting

$$w_F(\alpha) = rect_{T_F}(\alpha) \rightleftharpoons W_F(\omega) = Sinc\left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right)$$

$$|W_F(\omega)| = \left|Sinc\left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right)\right| = \left|\frac{Sin\left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right)}{\frac{\omega T_F}{2}}\right|$$

Therefore

$$|W_{DF}|^2 = 2(1 - \cos\omega T) \cdot |W_F|^2 = 2(1 - \cos\omega T) \cdot Sinc^2 \left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right) = 4\sin^2 \left(\frac{\omega T}{2}\right) \cdot Sinc^2 \left(\frac{\omega T_F}{2}\right)$$

that is, with **T=T_F**

$$|W_{DF}|^{2} = 2(1 - \cos \omega T) \cdot \frac{\sin^{2}\left(\frac{\omega T_{F}}{2}\right)}{\left(\frac{\omega T_{F}}{2}\right)^{2}} = 4 \frac{\sin^{4}\left(\frac{\omega T_{F}}{2}\right)}{\left(\frac{\omega T_{F}}{2}\right)^{2}}$$

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Example of noise filtering by CDF with GI

The use of the CDF based on Gated Integrator and $T=T_F$ is really common, but the formula is quite complicated.

Using Matlab we can plot the $|W_{DF}|^2$:



Let's try to approximate the computation in this particular (and really common) case

Approximation of CDF with GI



The noise is the integral in the Lin-Log plot:

$$\overline{n_f^2} = S_B f_c \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |W(f)|^2 d(\ln f)$$

We can approximate it with the first lobe

We would like to calculate the noise, and so the area, just like a rect, in the Lin-Log domain we have:

$$Area = \approx Peak * \ln\left(\frac{f_S}{f_i}\right)$$

From the Matlab plot we can derive: $f_i \approx 0.2$ and $f_S \approx 0.6$ and Peak ≈ 2.1 So we can finally calculate the noise as:

$$\overline{n_f^2} = S_B f_c \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |W(f)|^2 d(\ln f) = S_B f_c * Area = S_B f_c * Peak * \ln\left(\frac{f_S}{f_i}\right) = S_B f * 2.1 * \ln\left(\frac{0.6}{0.2}\right)$$

$$\overline{n_f^2} = S_B f_c * 2.3$$
The precise integral computation would be 2.7, just 15% more

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