

BPC203 Benchtop Piezo Controller User Guide



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Chapter 1 Safety

1.1 Safety Information

For the continuing safety of the operators of this equipment, and the protection of the equipment itself, the operator should take note of the **Warnings, Cautions** and **Notes** throughout this handbook and, where visible, on the product itself.

The following safety symbols may be used throughout the handbook and on the equipment itself.



Shock Warning



Given when there is a risk of injury from electrical shock.



Warning



Given when there is a risk of injury to users.



Caution



Given when there is a risk of damage to the product.

Note

Clarification of an instruction or additional information.

1.2 General Warnings



Warnings



If this equipment is used in a manner not specified by the manufacturer, the protection provided by the equipment may be impaired. In particular, excessive moisture may impair operation.

Spillage of fluid, such as sample solutions, should be avoided. If spillage does occur, clean up immediately using absorbant tissue. Do not allow spilled fluid to enter the internal mechanism.

Chapter 2 Overview

2.1 Introduction

The APT system multi-channel piezo controller offers a flexible alternative to standard benchtop controllers. Although the number of drive channels (1, 2 or 3) is selected at time of order, the functionality can be expanded later (up to 3 channels) by returning the unit to the factory for upgrade. Mixed feedback channel operation is possible, both open and closed loop modes are available configurable from the same card.

These high power units deliver up to 75V/500mA per channel and are compatible with all piezo-actuated nanopositioning actuators & stages in the Thorlabs range.

The unit combines the latest highspeed digital signal processors (DSP) with low-noise analog electronics and ActiveX® software technology for effortless one-, two- or three-axis motion. Additional axes can be driven by connecting one or more benchtop units via a standard USB hub.

Manual controls are located on the front face of the unit to allow manual adjustment of the piezo position using the digitally encoded adjustment pot. The display is easy to read and can be set to show either applied voltage or position in microns. Open or closed loop control and zeroing of the piezo can also be selected from the front panel.



Fig. 2.1 APT Three Channel Piezo Controller (BPC203)

The APT flexi-channel piezo controller is supplied with a full suite of software support tools. An intuitive graphical instrument panel allows immediate control and visualization of the operation of the piezo controller, and any other controllers that are installed in the system. See Section 2.2. for a full description of the APT system software.

The APT piezo unit operation is fully configurable (parameterized) with key settings exposed through the associated graphical interface panel. Open or closed loop

operating modes can be selected 'on the fly', and in both modes the display can be changed to show drive voltage or position (in microns). In the closed loop operation mode, both the P & I (proportional and integral) components of the feedback control loop can be altered to adjust the servoloop response. For convenience and ease of use, adjustment of many key parameters is possible through direct interaction with the graphical panel. For example, the output drive voltage or position can be adjusted by rotating a "software-panel" control knob (see the tutorial in Chapter 4 for further details). Note that all such settings and parameters are also accessible through the ActiveX programmable interfaces which allow the user to build automated alignment routines. See Section 2.2. for a full description of the APT system software and background on the advantages of the ActiveX Control technology.

The key innovation of the APT range of controllers and associated mechanical products is the ease and speed with which complete automated alignment systems can be engineered at both the hardware and software level. All controllers in the APT range are equipped with USB connectivity. The 'multi-drop' USB bus allows multiple APT units to be connected to a single controller PC using commercial USB hubs and cables. When planning an alignment application, simply add up the number and type of drive channels required and connect together the associated number of APT controllers. In the remainder of this handbook, the Tutorial section (Chapter 4) provides a good initial understanding on using the unit, and the reference section (Chapter 5) covers all operating modes and parameters in detail.

2.2 APT PC Software Overview

2.2.1 Introduction

As a member of the APT range of controllers, the BPC202 and BPC203 piezo controllers share many of the associated software benefits. This includes USB connectivity (allowing multiple units to be used together on a single PC), fully featured Graphical User Interface (GUI) panels, and extensive software function libraries for custom application development.

The APT software suite supplied with all APT controllers provides a flexible and powerful PC based control system both for users of the equipment, and software programmers aiming to automate its operation.

For users, the APTUser (see Section 2.2.2.) and APTConfig (see Section 2.2.3.) utilities allow full control of all settings and operating modes enabling complete 'out-of-box' operation without the need to develop any further custom software. Both utilities are built on top of a sophisticated, multi-threaded ActiveX 'engine' (called the APT server) which provides all of the necessary APT system software services such as generation of GUI panels, communications handling for multiple USB units, and logging of all system activity to assist in hardware trouble shooting. It is this APT server 'engine' that is used by software developers to allow the creation of advanced automated positioning applications very rapidly and with great ease. The APT server is described in more detail in Section 2.2.4.

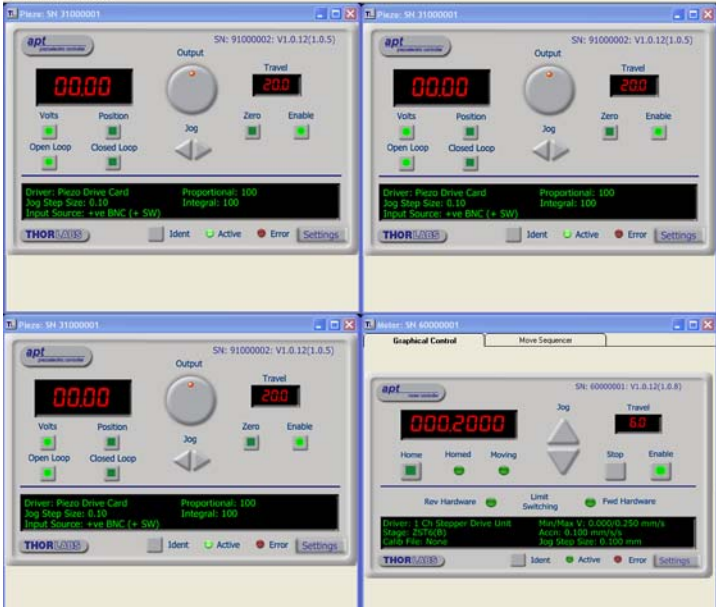
Aside

ActiveX®, a Windows®-based, language-independent technology, allows a user to quickly develop custom applications that automate the control of APT system hardware units. Development environments supported by ActiveX® technology include Visual Basic®, LabView™, Borland C++ Builder, Visual C++, Delphi™, and many others. ActiveX® technology is also supported by .NET development environments such as Visual Basic.NET and Visual C#.NET.

ActiveX controls are a specific form of ActiveX technology that provide both a user interface and a programming interface. An ActiveX control is supplied for each type of APT hardware unit to provide specific controller functionality to the software developer. See Section 2.2.4. for further details.

2.2.2 APTUser Utility

The APTUser application allows the user to interact with a number of APT hardware control units connected to the host PC. This program displays multiple graphical instrument panels to allow multiple APT units to be controlled simultaneously.



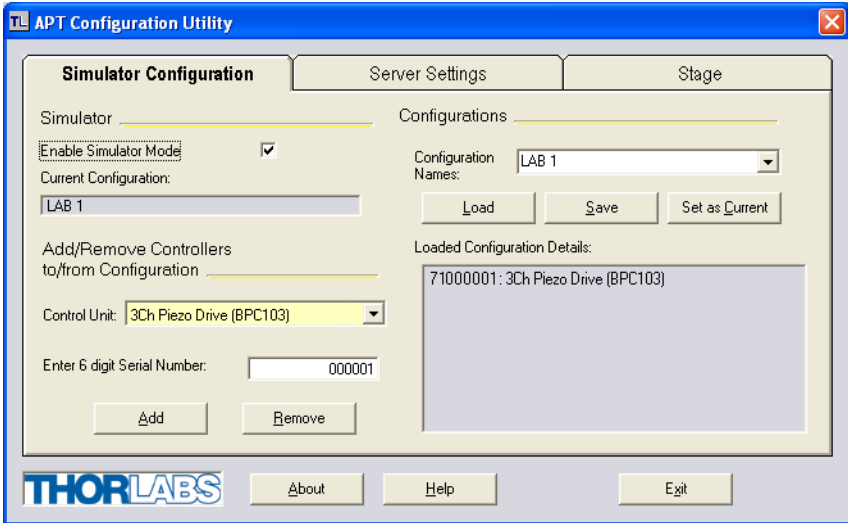
All basic operating parameters can be altered and, similarly, all operations (such as piezo moves) can be initiated. Settings and parameter changes can be saved and loaded to allow multiple operating configurations to be created and easily applied.

For many users, the APTUser application provides all of the functionality necessary to operate the APT hardware without the need to develop any further custom software. For those who do need to further customise and automate usage of the controller (e.g. to implement a positioning algorithm), this application illustrates how the rich functionality provided by the APT ActiveX server is exposed by a client application.

Use of the APT User utility is covered in the PC tutorial (Chapter 4) and in the APTUser online help file, accessed via the F1 key when using the APTUser utility.

2.2.3 APT Config Utility

There are many system parameters and configuration settings associated with the operation of the APT Server. Most can be directly accessed using the various graphical panels, however there are several system wide settings that can only be made 'off-line' before running the APT software. These settings have global effect; such as switching between simulator and real operating mode and incorporation of calibration data.



The APTConfig utility is provided as a convenient means for making these system wide settings and adjustments. Full details on using APTConfig are provided in the online help supplied with the utility.

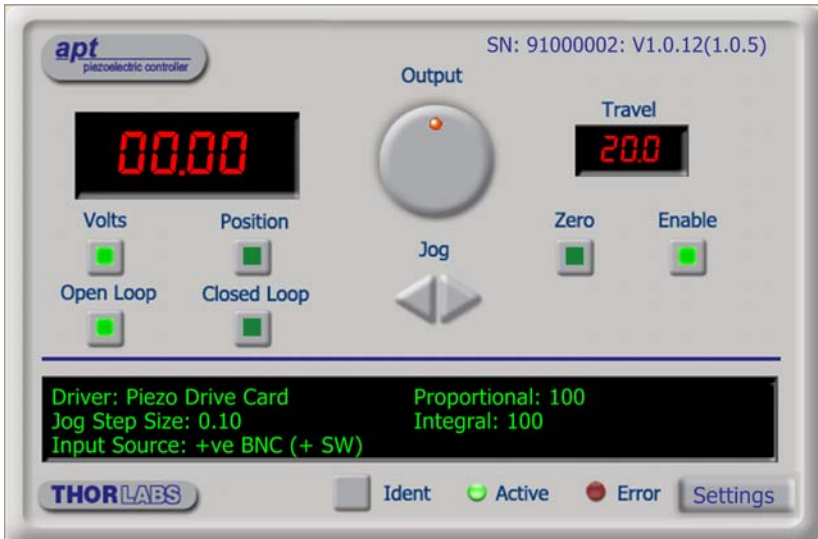
Use of the APT Config utility is covered in the PC tutorial (Chapter 4) and in the APTConfig online help file, accessed via the F1 key when using the APTConfig utility.

2.2.4 APT Server (ActiveX Controls)

ActiveX Controls are re-usable compiled software components that supply both a graphical user interface and a programmable interface. Many such Controls are available for Windows applications development, providing a large range of re-usable functionality. For example, there are Controls available that can be used to manipulate image files, connect to the internet or simply provide user interface components such as buttons and list boxes.

With the APT system, ActiveX Controls are deployed to allow direct control over (and also reflect the status of) the range of electronic controller units, including the BPC203 piezo controller. Software applications that use ActiveX Controls are often referred to as 'client applications'. Based on ActiveX interfacing technology, an ActiveX Control is a language independent software component. Consequently ActiveX Controls can be incorporated into a wide range of software development environments for use by client application developers. Development environments supported include Visual Basic, Labview, Visual C++, C++ Builder, HPVee, Matlab, VB.NET, C#.NET and, via VBA, Microsoft Office applications such as Excel and Word.

Consider the ActiveX Control supplied for a Piezo Drive Card fitted to a BPC203 APT piezo controller unit (one panel is displayed for each channel (card) fitted).



This Control provides a complete user graphical instrument panel to allow the Piezo unit to be manually operated, as well as a complete set of software functions (often called methods) to allow all parameters to be set and Piezo control operations to be automated by a client application. The instrument panel reflects the current operating state of the controller unit to which it is associated (e.g. such as piezo travel). Updates to the panel take place automatically when a user (client) application is making software calls into the same Control. For example, if a client application instructs the

associated Piezo Control to move to a particular position, progress is monitored automatically by changing position readout on the graphical interface, without the need for further programming intervention.

The APT ActiveX Controls collection provides a rich set of graphical user panels and programmable interfaces allowing users and client application developers to interact seamlessly with the APT hardware. Each of the APT controllers has an associated ActiveX Control and these are described fully in system online help. Note that the APTUser and APTConfig utilities take advantage of and are built on top of the powerful functionality provided by the APT ActiveX Server (as shown in Fig. 2.2).

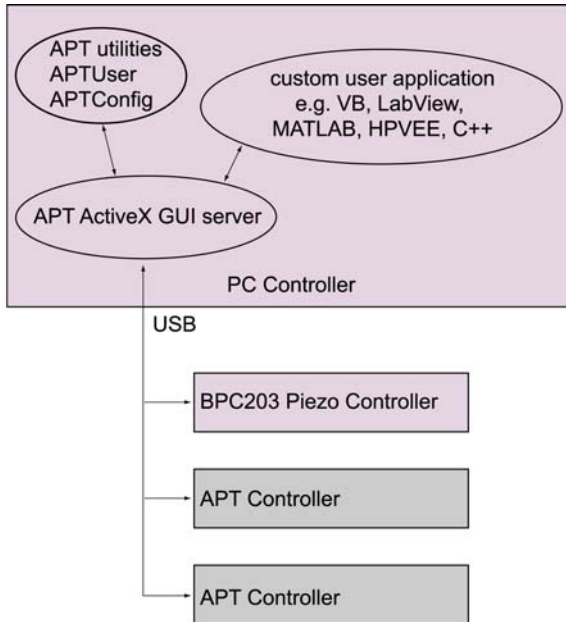


Fig. 2.2 System Architecture Diagram

Refer to the main APT Software online help file, *APTServer.hlp* (available from the Windows Start menu), for a complete programmers guide and reference material on using the APT ActiveX Controls collection. Additional software developer support is provided by the APT Support pages included on the software installation CD supplied with every APT controller. This CD contains a complete range of tutorial samples and coding hints and tips, together with handbooks for all the APT controllers.

2.2.5 Software Upgrades

Thorlabs operate a policy of continuous product development and may issue software upgrades as necessary.

Detailed instructions on installing upgrades are included on the APT Software CD ROM.

Chapter 3 Set Up

3.1 Installing APT Software

Note

When operating via a PC, direct user interaction with the unit is accomplished through intuitive graphical user interface panels (GUIs), which expose all key operating parameters and modes. The user can select multiple panel views displaying different information about a particular hardware unit. The multitasking architecture ensures that the graphical control panels always remain live, showing all current hardware activity.

Caution

Some PCs may have been configured to restrict the users ability to load software, and on these systems the software may not install/run. If you are in any doubt about your rights to install/run software, please consult your system administrator before attempting to install.

If you experience any problems when installing software, contact Thorlabs on +44 (0)1353 654440 and ask for Technical Support.

DO NOT CONNECT THE CONTROLLER TO YOUR PC YET

- 1) Insert the CD into your PC.
- 2) The CD should run automatically. If your CD does not start, double click the file 'autorun.exe', found on the Software CD.
- 3) A Welcome dialogue screen is displayed. Before installing the software, you are strongly advised to read the Installation Guide. Click the associated link.



- 4) Once you are familiar with the installation procedure, click the 'Install APT Software' hyperlink displayed on the Welcome dialogue screen.
- 5) Follow the on-screen instructions - see the Installation Guide supplied for more information.

3.2 Mechanical Installation

3.2.1 Siting

The unit is designed to be mounted free standing on a shelf, benchtop or similar surface.



Caution



**When siting the unit, it should be positioned so as not to impede the operation of the rear panel power supply switch.
Ensure that proper airflow is maintained to the rear of the unit.**

3.2.2 Environmental Conditions



Warning



Operation outside the following environmental limits may adversely affect operator safety.

Location	Indoor use only
Maximum altitude	2000 m
Temperature range	5°C to 40°C
Maximum Humidity	Less than 80% RH (non-condensing) at 31°C

To ensure reliable operation the unit should not be exposed to corrosive agents or excessive moisture, heat or dust.

If the unit has been stored at a low temperature or in an environment of high humidity, it must be allowed to reach ambient conditions before being powered up.



Caution



In applications requiring the highest level of accuracy and repeatability, it is recommended that the controller unit is powered up approximately 30 minutes before use, in order to allow the internal temperature to stabilize.

3.3 Electrical Installation

3.3.1 Connecting To The Supply



Shock Warning



The unit must be connected only to an earthed fused supply of 110 to 230V. Use only power supply cables supplied by Thorlabs, other cables may not be rated to the same current. The unit is shipped with appropriate power cables for use in the UK, Europe and the USA. When shipped to other territories the appropriate power plug must be fitted by the user. Cable identification is as follows:

Brown Live, Blue Neutral, Green/Yellow Earth/Ground

3.3.2 Fuses

Two T 3A/250V a.c. antisurge ceramic fuses are located on the back panel, one for the live feed and one for the neutral.

When replacing fuses:

- 1) Switch off the power and disconnect the power cord before removing the fuse cover.
- 2) Always replace broken fuses with a fuse of the same rating and type.

3.3.3 Powering Down The Unit



Warning



The controller may cause drive voltage spikes on power down. In applications requiring the highest sensitivity, the piezo drive voltage should be set to zero, and the HV cable disconnected before the unit is powered down.

3.3.4 Rear Panel Connections

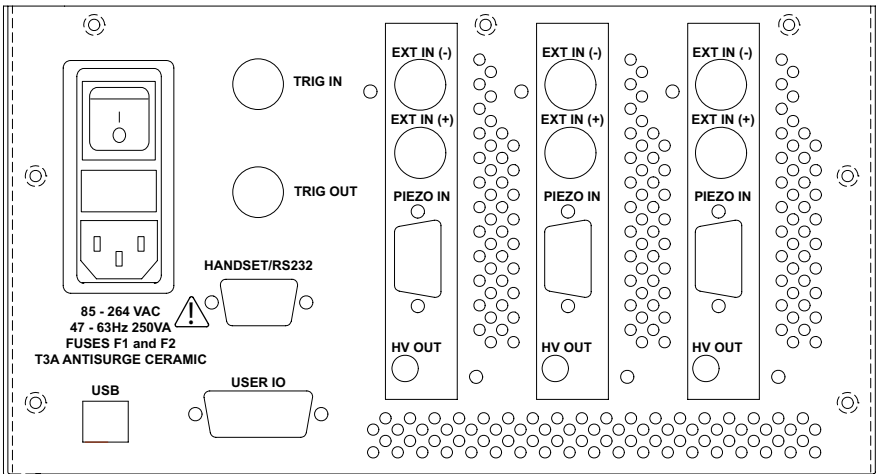


Fig. 3.1 Rear panel connections

TRIG IN – These inputs can be connected directly to mechanical switches, open-collector type outputs or most type of logic outputs to facilitate an input trigger - see Section A.2.5. for further details.

TRIG OUT – These outputs can be connected to an oscilloscope, and can also be used to drive most optocouplers - see Section A.2.4. for further details.

RS232/HANDSET - Provides connection for a remote handset (PHS101) or serial port communication - see Section A.3. for further details.

USER I/O - The User I/O connector exposes a number of internal electrical signals. For convenience, a number of logic inputs and outputs are included, thereby eliminating the need for extra PC based IO hardware. Using the APT support software, these user programmable logic lines can be deployed in applications requiring control of external devices such a relays, light sources and other auxilliary equipment. - see Section A.2. for further details.

USB - USB port for system communications.

Note

The USB cable length should be no more than 3 metres unless a powered USB hub is being used.

EXT IN (+) and EXT IN (-) (BNC connector) – These differential inputs can be used to control the position of the piezo actuator from an external source, where ± 11.74 V gives maximum piezo displacement. The input impedance is 20k Ω load. Polarity is selected in the Settings panel (see Section 5.2.) or in software by calling the Piezo SetIPSource method (see the *APTServer helpfile* available from the Windows ‘Start’ menu). The difference between the two signals is amplified internally before being routed to the HV OUT connector. The differential nature of these inputs can be useful in some applications, as they reject unwanted common mode signals. Although they are differential, these inputs can also be used in single-ended mode. In this configuration, the +ve input can be considered as non-inverting and the -ve input as inverting. The unused input can simply be left unconnected.

PIEZO IN – For use with piezo actuators with feedback capability. This connector receives the signal from the position sensor (strain gauge) of the piezo actuator to provide the feedback for the control loop - see Section A.1. for pin out details.

HV OUT (SMC connector) – 0 to 75V, 0 to 500mA. Provides the drive signal to the piezo actuator.

3.4 Front Panel Controls and Indicators

The front panel controls of the BPC203 piezo controller allow the unit to be operated as a standalone unit, without the need to connect to a PC.

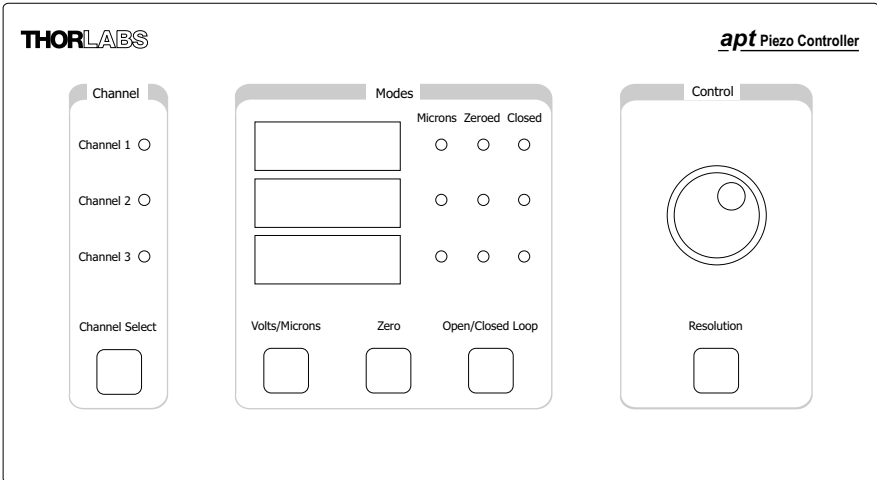


Fig. 3.2 Front panel controls and indicators

Channel Select Button – Selects the channel to which settings and adjustments made using The ‘Volts/Microns’, ‘Zero’, and ‘Open/Closed Loop’ buttons and the ‘Control’ potentiometer, are applied.

Channel LEDs – Show which channel is currently selected.

Digital Display – Shows the voltage applied to the piezo actuator/stack or the position (in microns).

Note

The main digital display will flash when the ‘Ident’ button is clicked on the APT Software GUI panel - see Section 5.1. for further details.

Microns LED – Indicates that the display is showing the piezo position in microns. If the LED is not lit, the display is showing the output voltage in Volts.

Zeroed LED – Indicates that the piezo has been zeroed. This LED flashes during the zeroing operation.

Closed LED – Indicates that the unit is operating in Closed Loop mode. If the LED is not lit, the unit is operating in open loop.

Volts/Microns Button – Selects either Volts or Microns to be displayed.

Open/Closed Loop Button – Selects Open or Closed Loop mode.

Zero Button – Initiates the zeroing routine - see Section 3.5.2.

Note

The 'Zero' and 'Open/Closed Loop' buttons perform the same function as their respective equivalents on the software GUI panel. If a control PC is connected, pressing these buttons has the same effect as pressing the corresponding GUI button. Similarly, the 'Zeroed' and 'Closed' LEDs correspond to the virtual button lights on the GUI.

The 'Volts/Microns' button is similar in function to the 'Volts' button on the GUI but it operates independently. For example, it is possible to display microns on the GUI but volts on the front panel

Control Potentiometer – Used to adjust the voltage applied to the piezo actuator/stack.

Resolution Button – Toggles the 'Control' potentiometer between 'Coarse' and 'Fine' adjustment and 'Parked' mode - see Section 3.5.1.

3.5 Button Operation

3.5.1 Resolution Button

The resolution button toggles the behaviour of the Control potentiometer between 'Coarse' and 'Fine' adjustment.

In 'Coarse' mode, one revolution of the pot varies the output by a factor of 10 greater than in 'Fine' mode. In 'Open loop' mode, the full 75V range corresponds to about 12 turns of the pot in 'Coarse' mode. In 'Parked' mode, the 'Control' potentiometer is disabled, and turning it has no effect.

At power up, the resolution defaults to 'Coarse'.

3.5.2 Zero Button

The position sensor is a strain gauge fitted to the piezo actuator. Due to limitations in manufacture, the strain gauge may give a small signal when the actuator is at zero position with zero volts applied. This 'offset' signal must be removed before the position attained by a specific applied voltage and the position attained by a corresponding specified distance can be rationalized.

Each actuator has a unique offset value. Therefore the offset should be adjusted whenever an actuator is replaced. Temperature and prolonged use can affect the performance of the strain gauge and therefore the offset value. It is good practice to adjust the offset value whenever the unit is powered up.

To adjust the offset zero:

- 1) Click the 'Zero' button. Notice that the 'Zeroed' led flashes to indicate that zeroing is in progress and the displayed position counts down towards zero (but may not reach zero).
- 2) When the zeroing move has been completed, the 'Zeroed' LED is lit.

3.6 Control Potentiometer Operation

The 'Control' potentiometer is an infinite turn encoder, used to adjust and set the voltage or position output as displayed in the main digital display. To increase the drive voltage, turn the potentiometer clockwise - once the maximum voltage (75V) is attained, subsequent clockwise turns do not effect the output, however the voltage decreases immediately the control is turned anticlockwise. Similarly, once the voltage has been decreased to 0V, subsequent anticlockwise turns do not effect the output, but the voltage increases immediately the control is turned clockwise.

If the channel is in closed loop mode (set using the 'closed loop' button on the panel) then this control can be used to adjust position output. If open loop mode is selected (using the 'open loop' button) then the control is used to adjust the voltage output.

3.6.1 Moving the Piezo using the 'Control' Potentiometer

- 1) Press the 'Open/Closed Loop' button until the associated 'Closed' LED is lit. The unit is now in Closed Loop mode.
- 2) Press the 'Volts/Microns' button until the associated 'Microns' LED is lit. The display now shows the piezo position in microns.
- 3) Rotate the 'Control' potentiometer clockwise. Notice how the position display increments to show the increasing piezo position.
- 4) Rotate the 'Output' control anticlockwise. Notice how the position display decrements to show the decreasing piezo position.
- 5) Press the 'Volts/Microns' button until the associated 'Microns' LED is extinguished. Notice how the display changes to show the voltage associated with the current piezo position.

3.7 Adjusting the Display Brightness

The display brightness can be adjusted in relation to the ambient light conditions.

To adjust the brightness:

- 1) Press and hold the Resolution button and turn the Control potentiometer.

3.7.1 Connecting The Hardware

- 1) Connect the piezo actuators to the Controller unit.
- 2) Connect the Controller unit to the power supply and switch 'ON'.
- 3) Connect the Controller unit to your PC.

Note

The USB cable should be no more than 3 metres in length. Communication lengths in excess of 3 metres can be achieved by using a powered USB hub).

Windows™ should detect the new hardware. Wait while Windows™ installs the drivers for the new hardware - see the Getting Started guide for more information

- 4) Run the APTUser utility
Start/Programs/Thorlabs/APT/APT User.
- 5) Your APT Piezo Controller is now ready for use.
See the Getting Started Guide supplied with the controller, or Chapter 4 of this manual, for a brief tutorial on operation of the unit.

3.8 Verifying Software Operation

3.8.1 Initial Setup

- 1) Install the APT software as detailed in Section 3.1.

Connect the controller to the actuators (see Section 3.3.4.) and the PC, then switch ON. Wait approximately 5 seconds for the system to settle.

Caution

In applications requiring the highest level of accuracy and repeatability, it is recommended that the controller unit is powered up approximately 30 minutes before use, in order to allow the internal temperature to stabilize.

- 2) Run the APTUser utility and check that the Graphical User Interface (GUI) panel appears and is active.



Fig. 3.3 Gui panel showing jog and ident buttons

- 3) Click the 'Ident' button. The associated channel LED on the front panel of the controller flashes. This is useful in multi-channel systems for identifying which channel is associated with which GUI.
- 4) Click the jog buttons on the GUI panel to move the piezo or axis connected to the controller. The position display for the associated GUI should increment and decrement accordingly.

Follow the tutorial described in Chapter 4 for further guidance on basic operation.

Note

The 'APT Config' utility can be used to set up simulated hardware configurations and place the APT Server into simulator mode. In this way it is possible to create any number and type of simulated (virtual) hardware units in order to emulate a set of real hardware. This is a particularly useful feature, designed as an aid to application program development and testing. Any number of 'virtual' control units are combined to build a model of the real system, which can then be used to test the application software offline.

If using real hardware, ensure that Simulator Mode is disabled. If using a simulated setup, enable Simulator Mode and set up a 'Simulated Configuration' - see Section 4.8. See also the *APTConfig* helpfile and the tutorial videos for detailed instructions.

Chapter 4 PC Operation - Tutorial

4.1 Introduction

The following brief tutorial guides the user through a typical series of actions and parameter adjustments performed using the PC based APT software. It assumes that the unit is electrically connected as shown in Section 3.3.4. and that the APT Software is already installed - see Section 3.1. It also assumes that a piezo-actuated stage is connected to the 'HV OUT and PIEZO IN' connectors on the rear panel.

4.2 Using the APT User Utility

The APT User.exe application allows the user to interact with any number of APT hardware control units connected to the PC USB Bus (or simulated via the APTConfig utility). This program allows multiple graphical instrument panels to be displayed so that multiple APT units can be controlled. All basic operating parameters can be set through this program, and all basic operations (such as piezo moves) can be initiated. Hardware configurations and parameter settings can be saved to a file, which simplifies system set up whenever APT User is run up.

This tutorial shows how the APTUser application provides all of the functionality necessary to operate the APT hardware.

- 1) Run the APT User program - Start/All Programs/Thorlabs/APT User/APT User. The APT server registers automatically the units connected on the USB bus and displays the associated GUI panels as shown in Fig. 4.1.

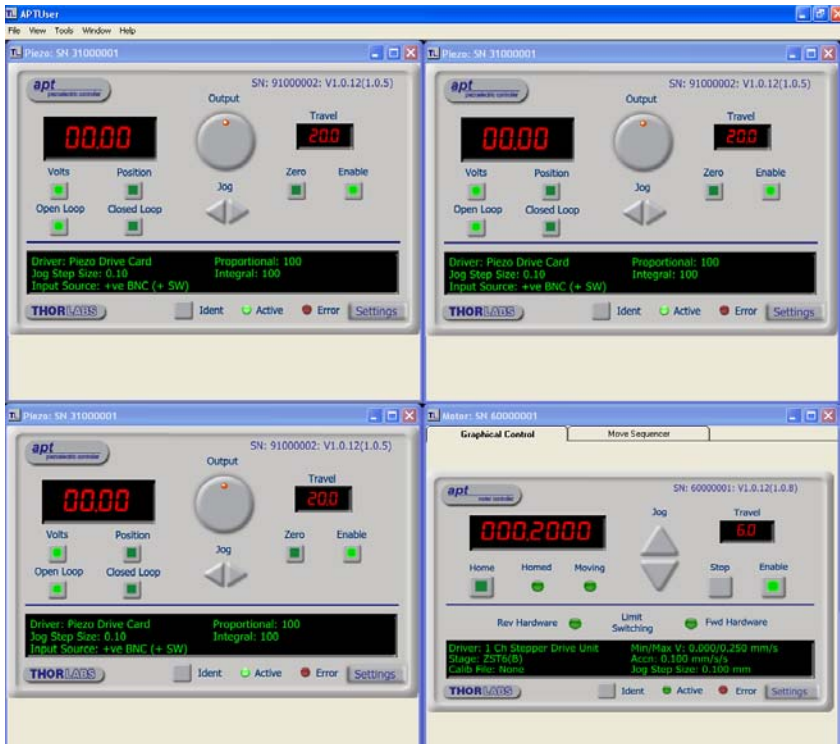


Fig. 4.1 Typical APT User Screen

Note

The BPC203 APT piezo controller unit can be fitted with up to three PCC101 piezo drive cards. Each card behaves as a discrete unit with its own GUI control panel.

- 2) Notice how the total travel for the associated piezo is displayed in the 'Travel' window - see Fig. 4.2.

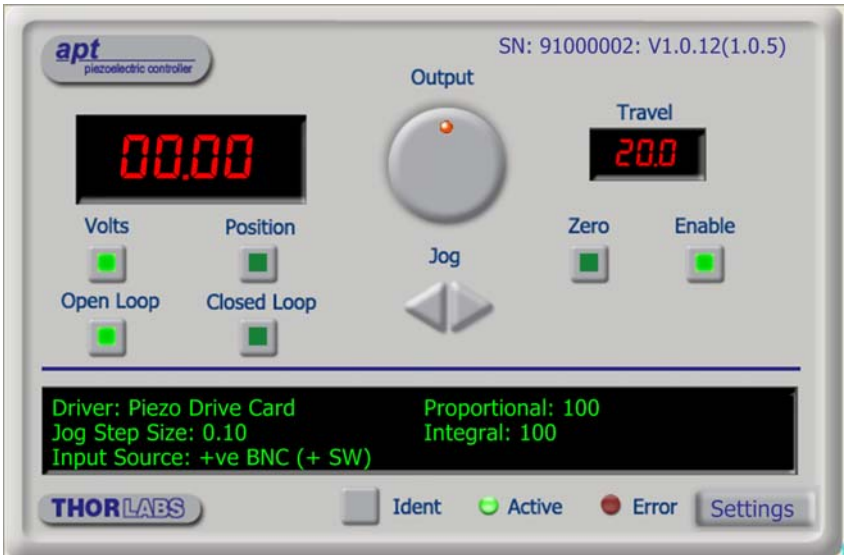


Fig. 4.2 Piezo Controller Software GUI

The APT User utility will be used throughout the rest of this tutorial to interface with the piezo controller.

4.3 Setting the Position Sensor Zero

The position sensor is a strain gauge fitted to the piezo actuator. Due to limitations in manufacture, the strain gauge may give a small signal when the actuator is at zero position with zero volts applied. This 'offset' signal must be removed before the position attained by a specific applied voltage and the position attained by a corresponding specified distance can be rationalized.

Each actuator has a unique offset value. Therefore the offset should be adjusted whenever an actuator is replaced. Temperature and prolonged use can affect the performance of the strain gauge and therefore the offset value. It is good practice to adjust the offset value whenever the unit is powered up.

To adjust the offset zero:

- 1) In the GUI panel, click the 'Zero' button. Notice that the led in the button flashes to indicate that zeroing is in progress and the displayed position counts down towards zero (but may not reach zero).
- 2) When the zeroing move has been completed, the 'Zero' LED is lit.

4.4 Moving the Piezo

The piezo can be manually positioned in three ways: by entering a position, by using the 'Output' potentiometer or by clicking the 'Jog' buttons.

4.4.1 Entering the piezo position

Note

The piezo position can be entered only when operating in 'Closed Loop' mode.

The position of the actuator is relative to the minimum position set for the arrangement using the 'Zero' button. The extension of the actuator will be displayed as a position in microns.

- 1) Click the 'Closed Loop' button.
- 2) Click the 'Position' button.
- 3) Click the position display.

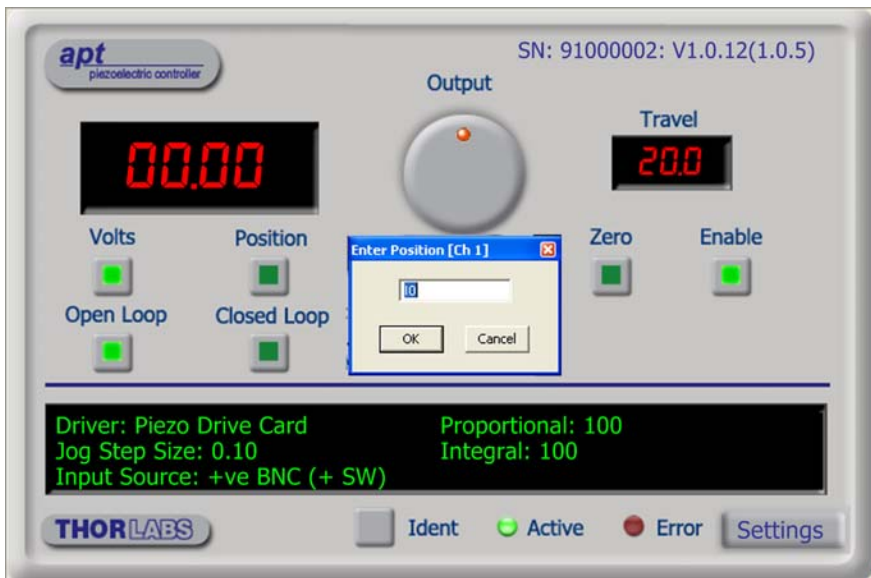


Fig. 4.3 Position Popup Window

- 4) Enter 10.0 into the pop up window
- 5) Click 'OK'. Notice that the position display counts up to 10.00 to indicate a move to a position 10 μ m from the Zero datum.

4.4.2 Moving the Piezo using the 'Output' control

The 'Output' control is used to adjust and set the voltage or position output as displayed in the main digital display. If the channel is in closed loop mode (set using the 'closed loop' button on the panel) then this control can be used to adjust position output. If open loop mode is selected (using the 'open loop' button) then the control is used to adjust the voltage output.

- 1) Click the 'Closed Loop' button.
- 2) Click the 'Position' button.
- 3) Rotate the 'Output' control clockwise. Notice how the position display increments to show the increasing piezo position.
- 4) Rotate the 'Output' control anticlockwise. Notice how the position display decrements to show the decreasing piezo position.
- 5) Click the 'Voltage' button. Notice how the display changes to show the voltage associated with the current piezo position.

Note

The read out in the main digital display is independent of the operating mode (open or closed loop) selected for the particular channel. If the 'Volts' button is selected, then the read out is in volts, even if the channel is in closed loop mode and the Output control is being used to adjust position. Similarly, if the 'position' button is selected, the read out is in microns, derived from the strain gauge feedback signal, even if the channel is operating in open loop.

4.4.3 Jogging the Piezos

When the jog buttons are pressed, the piezo moves by the step size specified in the Jog Step Size parameter.

- 1) Click the 'Settings' button to display the Settings panel.

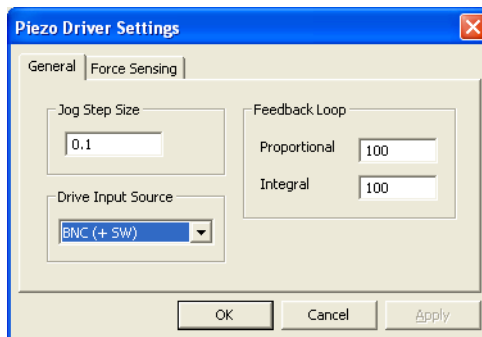


Fig. 4.4 Piezo settings panel

- 2) Select the General tab as shown in above.

- 3) In the 'Jog Step Size' field, enter 0.1
- 4) Click 'OK' to save the settings and close the window.
- 5) Click the upper Jog arrow on the GUI panel to jog the piezo. Notice that the position display increments 0.1 μ m every time the button is clicked.
- 6) Click the lower Jog arrow on the GUI panel. Notice that the position display decrements 0.1 μ m every time the button is clicked.

4.5 Using the Controller as a Piezo Amplifier

Certain applications may require the piezo to be driven by a voltage generated from an external source (e.g. 0 to 10V output). To achieve this, the controller must handle the amplification from 10V to 75V.

As an example, the following procedure explains how to configure the unit as a piezo amplifier.

- 1) Connect a 0 - 10V external source to the EXT IN (+) or EXT IN(-) connector on the rear panel.
- 2) In the GUI panel, click the 'Settings' button to display the settings panel.

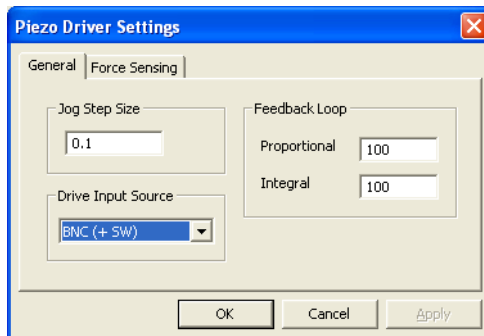


Fig. 4.5 Piezo settings panel

- 3) Select the 'General' tab.
- 4) In the 'Drive Input Source' field, select '*BNC (+SW)*'.
- 5) Click 'OK' to save the settings and close the window.

Any voltage on the rear panel BNC connector is now amplified by the unit and presented at the HV OUT (piezo drive) connector and the position of the piezo actuator can be controlled by varying the 0-10V external source.

4.6 Thermal Shutdown

In order to protect the piezo driver card from overheating due to abnormal load conditions, the electronics contains thermal protection circuitry. When the protection is activated, the HV output is shut down, limiting the maximum output current to a few milliamps, and the 'Error' LED on the GUI panel lights, warning the user of the fault condition. If the overtemp condition occurs, disconnect the load and allow 10 minutes for the unit to cool down.

4.7 Using the Controller with a Force Sensor

The controller unit can also be used to control a force sensor.

- 1) In the GUI panel, click the 'Settings' button to display the settings panel and select the Force Sensing tab.

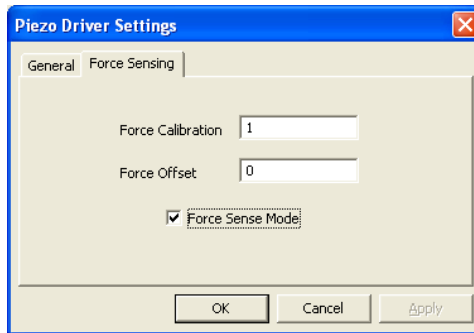


Fig. 4.6 Piezo settings panel

- 2) Check the *Force Sense Mode* box to select Force Sensing Mode.
- 3) Enter the calibration factor for the type of force sensor being used. For example, if set to 1, the GUI digital display shows a detected force of 0 to 1. The default setting for this parameter is 30, to be compatible with our FSC102 force sensor, which is specified to read forces up to 30N.
- 4) The force sensor may display an offset when no contact is apparent. The *Force Offset* parameter is used to remove any latent offset, such that the sensor only detects a force when contact is experienced. Enter the required value to remove any offset from the force sensor output.

In Force Sensor mode, an 'F' is displayed next to the digital display on the GUI panel.



Fig. 4.7 GUI Display - Force Sensor Mode

The system defaults to 'Position' (Force) display mode and the digital display shows the force detected by the sensor. The units of force are dependent upon the type of force sensor used.

4.8 Creating a Simulated Configuration Using APT Config

The 'APT Config' utility can be used to set up simulated hardware configurations and place the APT Server into simulator mode. In this way it is possible to create any number and type of simulated (virtual) hardware units in order to emulate a set of real hardware. This is a particularly useful feature, designed as an aid learning how to use the APT software and as an aid to developing custom software applications 'offline'.

Any number of 'virtual' control units can be combined to emulate a collection of physical hardware units. For example, an application program can be written, then tested and debugged remotely, before running with the hardware.

To create a simulated configuration proceed as follows:

- 1) Run the APT Config utility - Start/All Programs/Thorlabs/APT/APT Config.
- 2) Click the 'Simulator Configuration' tab.

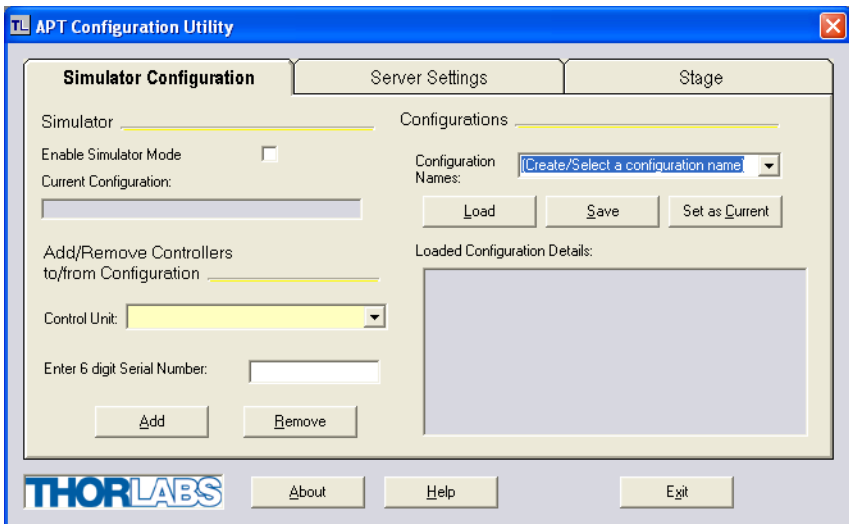
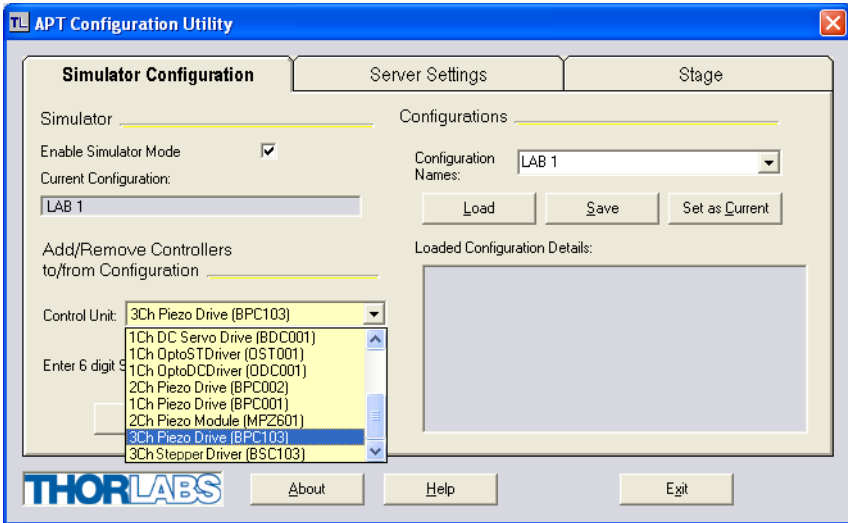


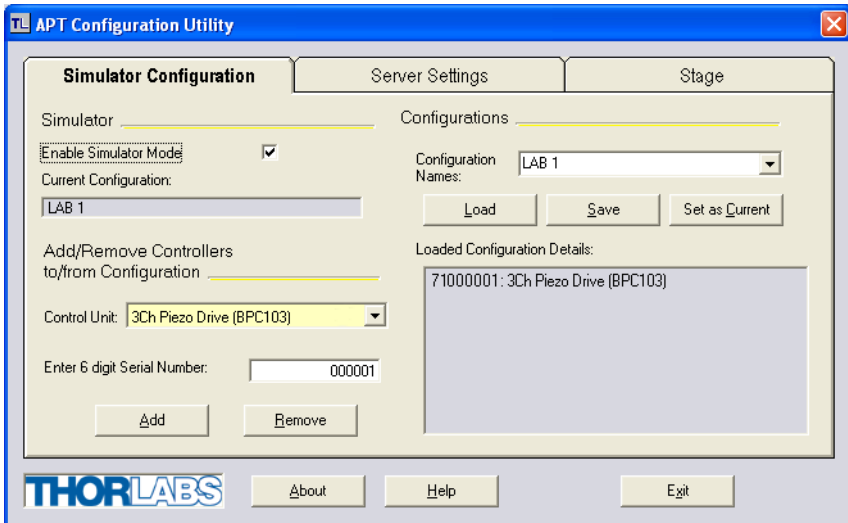
Fig. 4.8 APT Configuration Utility - Simulator Configuration Tab

- 3) Enter 'LAB1' in the Configuration Names field.

- In the 'Simulator' field, check the 'Enable Simulator Mode' box. The name of the most recently used configuration file is displayed in the 'Current Configuration' window.



- In the 'Control Unit' field, select '3 Ch Piezo Driver (BPC203)'. Note: The image shows 'BPC103' in the dropdown, but the text says 'BPC203'.



- 6) Enter a 6 digit serial number.

Note

Each physical APT hardware unit is factory programmed with a unique 8 digit serial number. In order to simulate a set of 'real' hardware the Config utility allows an 8 digit serial number to be associated with each simulated unit. It is good practice when creating simulated configurations for software development purposes to use the same serial numbers as any real hardware units that will be used. Although serial numbers are 8 digits (as displayed in the 'Load Configuration Details' window), the first two digits are added automatically and identify the type of control unit.

**The prefixed digits relating to the BPC203 piezo controller are:
71xxxxxx - Benchtop APT Single Channel Piezo Controller**

**When the APT Software is next run up, the system automatically creates
3 simulated single channel piezo drive cards.**

- 7) Click the 'Add' button.
- 8) Repeat items (1) to (7) as required. (A unit can be removed from the configuration by selecting it in the 'Loaded Configuration Details' window and clicking the 'Remove' button or by right clicking it and selecting the 'Remove' option from the pop up window).
- 9) Enter a name into the 'Configuration Names' field.
- 10) Click 'Save'.
- 11) Click 'Set As Current' to use the configuration.

Chapter 5 Software Reference

5.1 GUI Panel

The following screen shot shows the graphical user interface (GUI) (one panel per card fitted) displayed when accessing the controller using the APTUser utility.



Fig. 5.1 PCC101 Piezo Driver Software GUI

Note

The serial number of the PCC101 card associated with the GUI panel, the APT server version number, and the version number (in brackets) of the embedded software running on the unit, are displayed in the top right hand corner. This information should always be provided when requesting customer support.

Output Control - used to adjust and set the voltage or position output as displayed in the main digital display. If the channel is in closed loop mode (set using the 'closed loop' button on the panel) then this control can be used to adjust position output. If open loop mode is selected (using the 'open loop' button) then the control is used to adjust the voltage output. Note that the read out in the main digital display is independent of the operating mode (open or closed loop) selected for the particular channel. If the 'Volts' button is selected, then the read out is in volts, even if the channel is in closed loop mode and the Output control is being used to adjust position. Similarly, if the 'position' button is selected, the read out is in microns, derived from the strain gauge feedback signal, even if the channel is operating in open loop.

Jog - used to increment or decrement the piezo position. When the button is clicked, the piezo is driven in the selected direction, one step per click. The step size can be set in the 'Settings' panel or by using the SetJogStepSize method.

Travel - the range of travel (in μm) of the piezo actuator.

Zero - used to zero the position sensor (strain gauge) when operating in 'Closed Loop mode' - see Section 5.2.3. Setting The Position Sensor Zero.

Enable - enables or disables the HV channel's output voltage. With the piezo enabled, the LED in the button is lit. When disabled, the LED is unlit and the output voltage on the HV amp channel is set to zero volts.

Digital display - shows the voltage applied to the piezo, or the position (in microns), as determined by the feedback signal (if equipped). The display mode is set via the 'Volts' and 'Position' buttons.

Volts and Position - push button controls used to toggle the display between volts and position modes - see Section 5.2.4.. The corresponding button LED is lit when selected.

Open Loop and Closed Loop - push button control used to toggle between open loop and closed loop modes. The corresponding button LED is lit when selected.

Settings display - shows the following user specified settings:

Jog Step Size - the distance to move when a jog command is initiated. If in closed loop mode, the step size is measured in microns; if in open loop mode, the step size is measured in Volts. The step size can be set either via the Settings panel or by calling the SetJogStepSize method.

Input Source - displays the input source associated with the selected channel. The input source can be set either via the 'Settings' panel or by calling the SetIPSource method.

If *SW Only* is displayed, the unit responds only to software inputs and the output to the piezo actuator is that set using the SetVoltOutput method (or the GUI panel 'Output' control).

If *+ve BNC (+SW)* is displayed, the unit sums the differential signal on the rear panel EXT IN (+) and EXT IN (-) BNC connectors with the voltage set using the SetVoltOutput method (or the GUI panel 'Output' control).

Proportional - displays the proportional feedback loop constant for the selected channel (0 to 255).

Integral - displays the integration feedback loop constant for the selected channel (0 to 255).

Settings button - Displays the 'Settings' panel, which allows the tuning parameters to be entered - see Section 5.2.

Ident - when this button is pressed, the front panel LED associated with the relevant piezo card will flash for a short period.

Active - lit when the unit is operating normally and no error condition exists.

Error - lit when one of the following fault condition occurs:

- 1) One or more power supply voltages are out of range.
- 2) Closed loop mode is selected but the associated piezo is disconnected.
- 3) An overtemp condition has occurred - see Section 4.6.

5.2 Settings Panel

When the 'Settings' button on the GUI panel is clicked, the 'Settings' window is displayed. This panel allows data such as jog step size and input sources to be entered. Note that all of these parameters have programmable equivalents accessible through the ActiveX methods and properties on this Control (refer to the *Programming Guide* in the *APTServer helpfile* (accessed via the Windows 'Start' menu) for further details and to Section 2.2.4. for an overview of the APT ActiveX controls).

5.2.1 General tab.

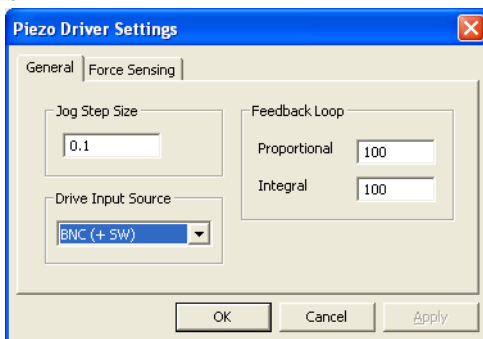


Fig. 5.1 Piezo Settings panel - General tab

Jog Step Size - the distance to move when a jog command is initiated. If in closed loop mode, the step size is measured in microns; if in open loop mode, the step size is measured in Volts.

Feedback Loop - these parameters determine the response characteristics when operating in closed loop mode. In general, the default values should not be altered.

Proportional - sets the proportional feedback loop constant for the selected channel (0 to 255).

Integral - sets the integral feedback loop constant for the selected channel (0 to 255).

Input Source - determines the input source(s) which controls the output from the HV amplifier circuit (i.e. the drive to the piezo actuators).

SW Only - the unit responds only to software inputs and the HV amp output is that set using the SetVoltOutput method (or the GUI panel 'Output' control).

BNC (+ SW) - the unit sums the differential signal on the rear panel EXT IN (+) and EXT IN (-) BNC connectors with the voltage set using the SetVoltOutput method (or the GUI panel 'Output' control).

5.2.2 Force Sensing tab

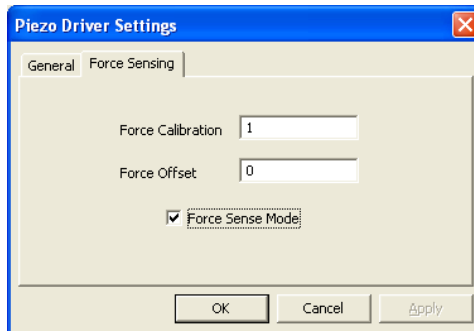


Fig. 5.2 Piezo Settings panel - Force Sensing tab

Force Sense Mode - Check this box to select Force Sensing Mode.

Force Calibration - This parameter specifies the calibration factor for the type of force sensor being used. For example, if set to 1, the GUI digital display shows a detected force of 0 to 1. The default setting for this parameter is 30, to be compatible with our FSC102 force sensor, which is specified to read forces up to 30N.

Force Offset - The force sensor may display an offset when no contact is apparent. This parameter is used to remove any latent offset, such that the sensor only detects a force when contact is experienced.

5.2.3 Setting the Position Sensor Zero

The position sensor is a strain gauge fitted to the piezo actuator. Due to limitations in manufacture, the strain gauge may give a small signal when the actuator is at zero position with zero volts applied. This 'offset' signal must be removed before the position attained by a specific applied voltage and the position attained by a corresponding specified distance can be rationalized. The offset is removed by clicking the 'Zero' button in the GUI panel or by calling the 'ZeroPosition' method in the application software.

Each actuator has a unique offset value. Therefore the offset should be adjusted whenever an actuator is replaced. Temperature and prolonged use can affect the performance of the strain gauge and therefore the offset value. It is good practice to adjust the offset value whenever the unit is powered up.

5.2.4 Choice of Display Mode

It is possible to set the GUI to display either the voltage applied to the actuator or the position measured by the sensor (in microns). Even if the module is in open-loop mode, the signal from the position sensor can still be displayed.

In the case of actuators with position feedback, there are 4 modes of operation in total;

- 1) Open-loop, display voltage applied to actuator
- 2) Closed-loop, display position (microns) measured by sensor
- 3) Closed-loop, display voltage applied to actuator
- 4) Open-loop, display position (microns) measured by sensor.

Note

These options can be selected through the GUI 'Settings' panel or by calling the SetVoltPosDispMode method from the application software.

The controller unit can also be used to control a force sensor. This is achieved either by calling the SetForceSenseParams method (see the APTServer Helpfile, accessed via the F1 key) or by checking the Force Sensing box in the settings panel (see Section 5.2.2.).

When checked, an 'F' is displayed next to the digital display on the GUI panel.



Fig. 5.3 GUI Display - Force Sensing Mode

The system defaults to 'Position' (Force) display mode and the digital display shows the force detected by the sensor. The units of force are dependent upon the type of force sensor used.

5.2.5 Detection of Range of Travel

In the case of actuators with position feedback, the Piezoelectric driver can detect the range of travel of the actuator, since this information is programmed in the electronic circuit inside the actuator.

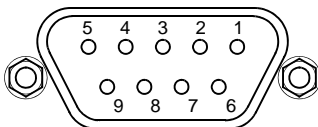
It is possible to get the range of travel of the actuator from the application software by calling the *GetMaxTravel* method – see the *APTServer Help File* (accessed via the Windows 'Start' menu).

This feature is not present in actuators without position sensing.

Appendix A Rear Panel Connector Pinout Details

A.1 Rear Panel PIEZO IN Connectors

This connector receives the signal from the position sensor (strain gauge) of the piezo actuator to provide the feedback for the control loop. The pin functions are detailed in Fig. A.1.



Pin	Description
1	Strain Gauge excitation
2	† +15V out
3	† -15V out
4	Ground
5	AC Feedback IN
6	Ground
7	* Actuator ID signal
8	Reserved for future use
9	Reserved for future use

Notes

† Power supply for the piezo actuator feedback circuit. It must not be used to drive any other circuits or devices.

* This signal is applicable only to Thorlabs actuators. It enables the system to identify the piezo extension associated with the actuator.

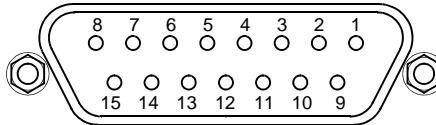
Fig. A.1 PIEZO IN Connector Pin Identification

A.2 Rear Panel User I/O Connector

A.2.1 Pin Identification

The User I/O connector exposes a number of internal electrical signals. For convenience, a number of logic inputs and outputs are included, thereby eliminating the need for extra PC based IO hardware. Using the APT support software, these user programmable logic lines can be deployed in applications requiring control of external devices such a relays, light sources and other auxilliary equipment.

The pin functions are detailed in in Fig. 1.2 .



Pin	Description	Return	Pin	Description	Return
1	Digital O/P 1	5, 9, 10	9	Digital Ground	
2	Digital O/P 2	5, 9, 10	10	Digital Ground	
3	Digital O/P 3	5, 9, 10	11	For Future Use (Trigger Out)	5, 9, 10
4	Digital O/P 4	5, 9, 10	12	For Future Use (Trigger IN)	5, 9, 10
5	Digital Ground		13	Digital I/P 4	5, 9, 10
6	Digital I/P 1	5, 9, 10	14	5V Supply Output	5, 9, 10
7	Digital I/P 2	5, 9, 10	15	5V Supply Output	5, 9, 10
8	Digital I/P 3	5, 9, 10			



Warning



Do not, under any circumstances attempt to connect the digital I/O to any external equipment that is not galvanically isolated from the mains or is connected to a voltage higher than the limits specified in Section A.2.2. to Section A.2.6.. In addition to the damage that may occur to the controller there is a risk of serious injury and fire hazard.

Fig. 1.2 USER Connector Pin Identification

A.2.2 Digital Outputs

All digital outputs are of the open-collector type, with a 330 Ohm series resistor. When the output is set to a logic zero (which is also the default state), it behaves as open circuit. When it is a logic one, it behaves as a 330 Ohm resistor connected to ground.

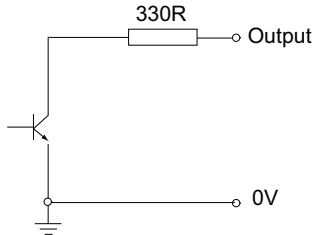


Fig. A.3 Digital Output Schematic

In some applications, the digital outputs may be required to control external equipment that has optocoupler type inputs (such as PLCs). The digital outputs used here can be used to directly drive most optocouplers and the +5V supply available on pins 14 and 15 can be used to provide power for the optocouplers.

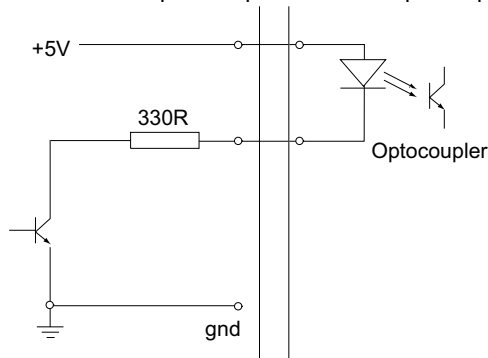


Fig. A.4 Application Example: Connection to Optocoupler Inputs

The digital outputs can also be used to interface to external logic circuitry (a pull-up resistor may be needed if the external logic does not contain it) or control other types of inputs.



Caution



The voltage that external equipment applies to the digital outputs must be within the range 0 V and +5 V DC, or damage to the outputs may occur.

Please see the APTServer helpfile for details on software calls used to control these logic IO.

A.2.3 Digital Inputs

The digital inputs used in the controller are of the standard CMOS logic gate type with TTL compatible input levels and a built-in pull-up resistor (10 kOhm to +5V). They can be connected directly to mechanical switches, open-collector type outputs or most type of logic outputs.

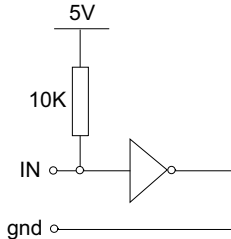


Fig. A.5 Digital Input Schematic (protection circuitry not shown)

When connected to a switch, the inputs will read as logic LOW if the switch is open circuit and HIGH if the switch is closed. When connected to a logic output, or any other voltage source, the input is guaranteed to read LOW if the voltage is above 2.4V and HIGH when the output is below 0.8 V. Please see the APTServer helpfile for details on software calls used to control these logic IO.

Caution

The voltage applied to the digital inputs must be within the range 0 V to +7V DC, or damage to the outputs may occur.

A.2.4 Trigger Output

The trigger output is different from the rest of the digital outputs in that it is a 5V CMOS logic gate with a series 1 kOhm resistor for protection. It behaves as +5V voltage source with 1 kOhm in series when the outputs is a logic HIGH, and 1 kOhm to ground when it is a logic LOW. The 1 kOhm resistor limits the current to 5 mA maximum for any load as long as the output is not connected to voltages outside the 0 V to +5V range.

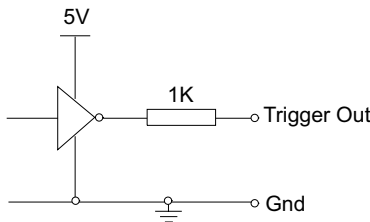


Fig. A.6 Trigger Output Schematic

As this output is actively driven, it can be connected, for example, to an oscilloscope without a need for an external pull-up resistor. It can also be used to drive most optocouplers.

A.2.5 Trigger Input

The Trigger inputs are electrically identical to the digital inputs (i.e. a standard CMOS logic gate type with TTL compatible input levels and a built-in pull-up resistor, 10 kOhm to +5V). They can be connected directly to mechanical switches, open-collector type outputs or most type of logic outputs.

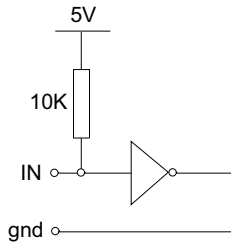


Fig. A.7 Trigger Input Schematic (protection circuitry not shown)

When connected to a switch, the inputs will read as logic LOW if the switch is open circuit and HIGH if the switch is closed. When connected to a logic output, or any other voltage source, the input is guaranteed to read LOW if the voltage is above 2.4V and HIGH when the output is below 0.8 V.



Caution



The voltage applied to the trigger inputs must be within the range 0 V to +7V DC, or damage to the outputs may occur.

A.2.6 +5 Volt Supply

A +5 V, 250 mA supply is provided for interfacing to external circuits that require a power source.



Caution



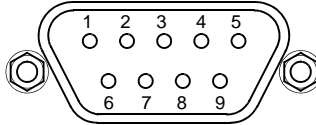
Do not exceed the 250 mA maximum output current. For applications requiring higher currents an external power supply must be used.

A.3 Rear Panel RS232/HANDSET Connector

A.3.1 Pin Identification

The RS232/HANDSET connector exposes internal electrical signals for use with serial communications or an external remote control handset, e.g. Thorlabs PHS101 Remote Handset.

The pin functions are detailed in in Fig. A.8 .



Pin	Description
1	Not Connected
2	TX (controller output)
3	RX (controller input)
4	Not Connected
5	Ground
6	Not Connected
7	Not Connected
8	Not Connected
9	Supply Voltage for Handset +11.5V, 100 mA maximum

Fig. A.8 RS232/HANDSET Connector Pin Identification

Appendix B Preventive Maintenance



Shock Warning



The equipment contains no user servicable parts. There is a risk of electrical shock if the equipment is operated with the covers removed. Only personnel authorized by Thorlabs Ltd and trained in the maintenance of this equipment should remove its covers or attempt any repairs or adjustments. Maintenance is limited to safety testing and cleaning as described in the following sections.

B.1 Safety Testing

PAT testing in accordance with local regulations, should be performed on a regular basis, (typically annually for an instrument in daily use).



Caution



The instrument contains a power supply filter. Insulation testing of the power supply connector should be performed using a DC voltage.

B.2 Cleaning.



Warning



Disconnect the power supply before cleaning the unit.

Never allow water to get inside the case.

Do not saturate the unit.

Do not use any type of abrasive pad, scouring powder or solvent, e.g. alcohol or benzene.

The fascia may be cleaned with a soft cloth, lightly dampened with water or a mild detergent.

Appendix C Specifications and Associated Parts

C.1 Specifications

Parameter	Value
Piezoelectric Output	
Connector Type	SMC Male
Voltage Output	0 to 75 V DC/channel
Voltage Stability	100ppm over 24 hours (after 30 mins warm up time)
Noise	<3m V RMS
Output Current	500mA/channel
Strain Gauge Position Feedback (per channel)	
Feedback	D-type 9-Pin Connector
Analog Inputs (BNC)	0 to 10 VDC
User Input/Output	
Connector Type	(D-type 15 Pin Female)
Pin Functions	Digital Output Digital Input Trigger Output Trigger Input +5V Output
USB Port	Version 1.1
Input Power Requirements (DIN Connector)	
Voltage	85-264 VAC
Power	200W
Fuse	3A
General Data	
Housing Dimensions (W x D x H)	240 x 360 x 133mm (9.5 x 14.2 x 5.2 in.)
Weight:	6.7kg (14.75 lbs)

C.2 Associated Products

Product Name	Part Number
Drive Cable for Piezoelectric Actuators (3.0 m)	PAA100
Drive Cable Extension for Piezo Actuators (3.0 m)	PAA100A
Drive Cable for Piezoelectric Actuators (1.5 m)	PAA101
Drive Cable Extension for Piezo Actuators (1.5 m)	PAA101A
Feedback Cable for Piezoelectric Actuators (1.0 m)	PAA605
Feedback Cable for Piezoelectric Actuators (3.0 m)	PAA606
Piezoelectric Feedback Cable, Male D-type to Female LEMO converter (3.0 m)	PAA622
Piezoelectric Feedback Cable, Female D-type to Male LEMO converter (3.0 m)	PAA623
Piezo Remote Control Handset	PSH101

Appendix D Piezo Control Method Summary

The 'Piezo' ActiveX Control provides the functionality required for a client application to control one or more of the APT series of piezo controller units. This range of controllers covers both open and closed loop piezo control in a variety of formats including compact Cube type controllers, benchtop units and 19" rack based modular drivers. Note one additional product, the TSG001 T-Cube Strain Gauge reader is another member of the APT controller range - and can also be accessed using the Piezo ActiveX Control.

To specify the particular controller being addressed, every unit is factory programmed with a unique 8-digit serial number. This serial number is key to the operation of the APT Server software and is used by the Server to enumerate and communicate independently with multiple hardware units connected on the same USB bus. The serial number must be specified using the HWSerialNum property before an ActiveX control instance can communicate with the hardware unit. This can be done at design time or at run time. Note that the appearance of the ActiveX Control GUI (graphical user interface) will change to the required format when the serial number has been entered.

The Methods and Properties of the Piezo ActiveX Control can be used to perform activities such as selecting output voltages, reading the strain gauge position feedback, operating open and closed loop modes and enabling force sensing mode. A brief summary of the methods and properties applicable to the BPC203 unit is given below, for more detailed information and individual parameter description please see the on-line help file supplied with the APT server.

Methods

DeleteParamSet	Deletes stored settings for specific controller.
DisableHWChannel	Disables the drive output.
DoEvents	Allows client application to process other activity.
EnableEventDlg	Enables or disables the event dialog box.
EnableHWChannel	Enables the drive output.
GetControlMode	Gets the loop operating mode (open/closed).
GetForceSenseParams	Gets the force sensing mode parameters.
GetIPSource	Gets the HV amplifier input source.
GetJogStepSize	Gets the jogging step size.
GetMaxTravel	Gets the maximum travel of a strain gauge equipped piezo actuator
GetOutputLUTParams	Gets the output voltage waveform (LUT) operating parameters.

GetOutputLUTTrigParams	Gets the output voltage waveform (LUT) triggering parameters.
GetOutputLUTValue	Gets a specific voltage output value in the voltage waveform (LUT) table.
GetParentHWInfo	Gets the identification information of the host controller.
GetPosOutput	Gets the piezo actuator extension in closed loop mode.
GetVoltOutput	Gets the HV output voltage.
GetVoltPosDispMode	Gets the GUI display mode (voltage or position).
Identify	Identifies the controller by flashing unit LEDs.
LLGetDigIPs	Gets digital input states encoded in 32 bit integer.
LLGetStatusBits	Gets the controller status bits encoded in 32 bit integer.
LLGetHostStatusBits	Gets the controller status bits encoded in 32 bit integer.
LLSaveHWDefaults	Allows the current settings of the operation parameters to be saved into the onboard 'Flash' memory of the hardware unit.
LLSetGetDigOPs	Sets or Gets the user digital output bits encoded in 32 bit integer.
LLSetGetHostDigOPs	Sets or Gets the user digital output bits encoded in 32 bit integer.
LoadParamSet	Loads stored settings for specific controller.
SaveParamSet	Saves settings for a specific controller.
SetAmpFeedbackSig	Sets the feedback signal type (AC or DC).
SetControlMode	Sets the loop operating mode (open/closed).
SetForceSenseParams	Sets the force sensing mode parameters.
SetHWMMode	Sets Piezo Amp or NanoTrak operating mode.
SetIPSource	Sets the HV amplifier input source.
SetJogStepSize	Sets the jogging step size.
SetOutputLUTParams	Sets the output voltage waveform (LUT) operating parameters.
SetOutputLUTTrigParams	Sets the output voltage waveform (LUT) triggering parameters.
SetOutputLUTValue	Sets a specific voltage output value in the voltage waveform (LUT) table.
SetPosOutput	Sets the piezo actuator extension in closed loop mode.

SetVoltOutput	Sets the HV output voltage.
SetVoltPosDispMode	Sets the GUI display mode (voltage or position).
ShowEventDialog	Shows the event dialog when it has previously been disabled using the EnableEventDlg method
StartCtrl	Starts the ActiveX Control (starts communication with controller)
StartOutputLUT	Starts outputting the voltage waveform (LUT).
StopCtrl	Stops the ActiveX Control (stops communication with controller)
StopOutputLUT	Stops outputting the voltage waveform (LUT).
ZeroPosition	Nulls the strain gauge reading to take out offset errors.

Properties

APTHelp	Specifies the help file that will be accessed when the user presses the F1 key. If APTHelp is set to 'True', the main server helpfile MG17Base will be launched.
HWSerialNum	specifies the serial number of the hardware unit to be associated with an ActiveX control instance.

Appendix E Piezo Operation - Background

E.1 Piezoelectric Controller

E.1.1 The Piezoelectric Effect

Piezoelectricity is the effect whereby certain types of crystal expand reversibly when subjected to an electric field.

Although the amount of expansion is usually very small (corresponding to less than 1% strain in the material) it can be controlled extremely finely by varying the strength of the electric field. Piezoelectric materials therefore form the basis of very high precision actuators. The resolution of these actuators is effectively only limited by the noise and stability of the drive electronics. Moreover, the force generated by the expanding piezo is very large, typically hundreds of newtons.

Perhaps the most useful property of these actuators is their ability to produce oscillating motion at considerable frequencies, usually limited by the mechanical system driven rather than by the piezo actuator itself. This ability is used to advantage in the NanoTrak control system, for example.

The electric field gradient needed to produce a useful amount of expansion is quite large. Thus to avoid excessive drive voltages, the actuator is constructed as a stack, consisting of lamina of active material sandwiched among electrodes – see Fig. E.1. In this way, the distance from positive to negative electrodes is very small. A large field gradient can therefore be obtained with a modest drive voltage (75 V in the case of Thorlabs actuators).

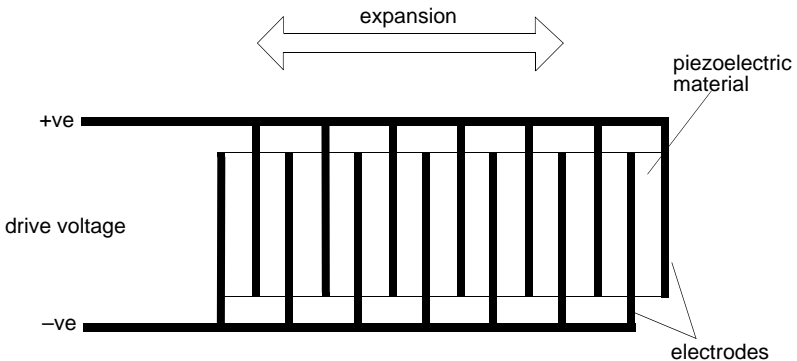


Fig. E.1 Piezo-electric actuator schematic diagram

E.1.2 Hysteresis

Despite the very high resolution of piezoelectric actuators, an inherent problem is the significant amount of hysteresis they exhibit, (i.e., the tendency of the actuator to reach a final position that lags behind the demand position).

If a cyclic voltage is applied to the actuator the positions reached on the upward sweep are smaller than those achieved on the downward sweep. If position is plotted against voltage, the graph describes a hysteresis loop – see Fig. E.2.

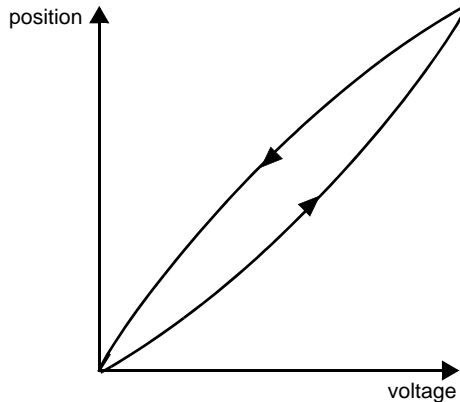


Fig. E.2 Piezo-electric hysteresis

E.1.3 Position Sensing and Feedback Control

Hysteresis can be eliminated by using a position sensor and feedback loop, i.e., the sensor measures the position, the circuit subtracts the measured position from the demand position to get the error, and a proportional-integral feedback loop adjusts the voltage to the actuator until the error is virtually zero.

Some Thorlabs nanopositioning actuators have position sensing, others do not. The Piezoelectric control module allows both types to be controlled.

To control an actuator with position sensing, the Piezoelectric control module should be set to closed-loop mode. To control an actuator without position sensing, the Piezoelectric Control module should be set to open-loop mode.

Note

An actuator with position sensing can also be driven in open-loop mode if desired, since the feedback part of the circuit can be switched off. An advantage of open-loop mode is the greater bandwidth of the system.

Block diagrams for both modes of operation are shown in Fig. E.3.

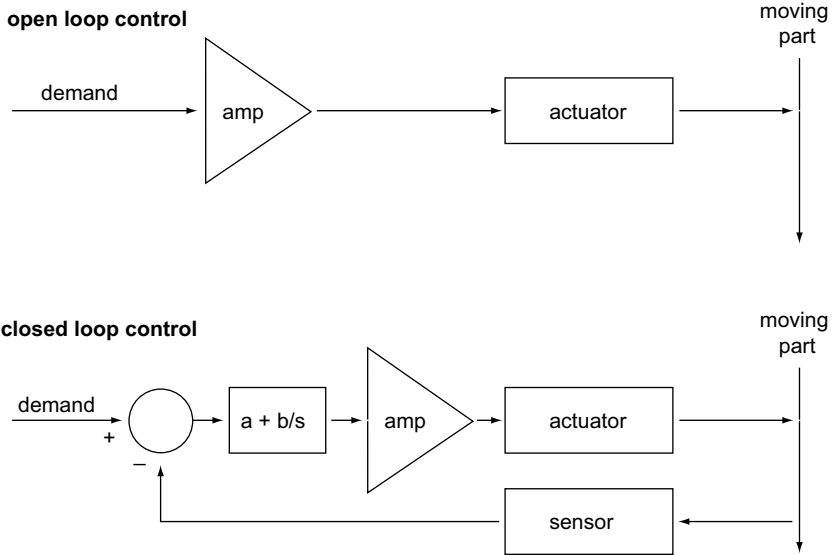


Fig. E.3 Open loop and closed loop control

The result of using closed-loop control is a linear relationship between demand (voltage) and measured position – see Fig. E.4, in contrast to open loop control – see Fig. E.2.

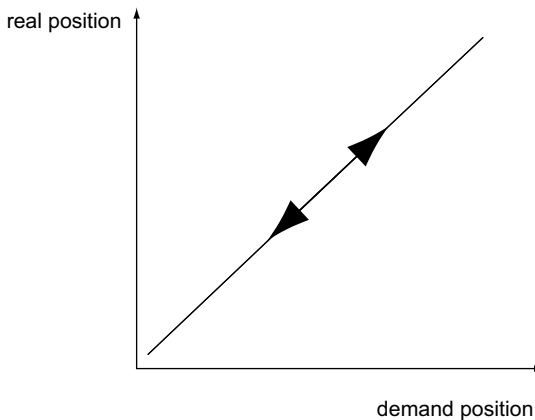


Fig. E.4 Closed loop response

Appendix F Regulatory

F.1 Declarations Of Conformity

F.1.1 For Customers in Europe

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the EC Directives 89/336/EEC 'EMC Directive' and 73/23/EEC 'Low Voltage Directive' as amended by 93/68/EEC.

Compliance was demonstrated by conformance to the following specifications which have been listed in the Official Journal of the European Communities:

Safety	EN61010: 2001 Installation Category II, Pollution Degree II.
EMC	EN61326: 1997

F.1.2 For Customers In The USA

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class A digital device, pursuant to part 15 of the FCC rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference when the equipment is operated in a commercial environment. This equipment generates, uses and can radiate radio frequency energy and, if not installed and used in accordance with the instruction manual, may cause harmful interference to radio communications. Operation of this equipment in a residential area is likely to cause harmful interference in which case the user will be required to correct the interference at his own expense. Changes or modifications not expressly approved by the company could void the user's authority to operate the equipment.

F.2 Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive

F.2.1 Compliance

As required by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive of the European Community and the corresponding national laws, we offer all end users in the EC the possibility to return "end of life" units without incurring disposal charges.

This offer is valid for electrical and electronic equipment

- sold after August 13th 2005
- marked correspondingly with the crossed out "wheelie bin" logo (see Fig. 1)
- sold to a company or institute within the EC
- currently owned by a company or institute within the EC
- still complete, not disassembled and not contaminated



Fig. 6.1 Crossed out "wheelie bin" symbol

As the WEEE directive applies to self contained operational electrical and electronic products, this "end of life" take back service does not refer to other products, such as

- pure OEM products, that means assemblies to be built into a unit by the user (e. g. OEM laser driver cards)
- components
- mechanics and optics
- left over parts of units disassembled by the user (PCB's, housings etc.).

If you wish to return a unit for waste recovery, please contact Thorlabs or your nearest dealer for further information.

F.2.2 Waste treatment on your own responsibility

If you do not return an "end of life" unit to the company, you must hand it to a company specialized in waste recovery. Do not dispose of the unit in a litter bin or at a public waste disposal site.

F.2.3 Ecological background

It is well known that WEEE pollutes the environment by releasing toxic products during decomposition. The aim of the European RoHS directive is to reduce the content of toxic substances in electronic products in the future.

The intent of the WEEE directive is to enforce the recycling of WEEE. A controlled recycling of end of life products will thereby avoid negative impacts on the environment.

Appendix G Thorlabs Worldwide Contacts

For technical support or sales inquiries, please visit us at www.thorlabs.com/contact for our most up-to-date contact information.



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