

YCbCr to RGB Considerations

Introduction

Many video ICs now generate 4:2:2 YCbCr video data. The YCbCr color space was developed as part of ITU-R BT.601 (formerly CCIR 601) during the development of a world-wide digital component video standard.

Some of these video ICs also generate digital RGB video data, using lookup tables to assist with the YCbCr to RGB conversion. By understanding the YCbCr to RGB conversion process, the lookup tables can be eliminated, resulting in a substantial cost savings.

This application note covers some of the considerations for converting the YCbCr data to RGB data without the use of lookup tables. The process basically consists of three steps:

1. 4:2:2 to 4:4:4 YCbCr Conversion
2. 4:4:4 YCbCr to RGB Conversion
3. Linear RGB Generation

Converting 4:2:2 to 4:4:4 YCbCr

Prior to converting YCbCr data to R'G'B' data, the 4:2:2 YCbCr data must be converted to 4:4:4 YCbCr data. For the YCbCr to RGB conversion process, each Y sample must have a corresponding Cb and Cr sample.

Figure 1 illustrates the positioning of YCbCr samples for the 4:4:4 format. Each sample has a Y, a Cb, and a Cr value. Each sample is typically 8 bits (consumer applications) or 10 bits (professional editing applications) per component.

Figure 2 illustrates the positioning of YCbCr samples for the 4:2:2 format. For every two horizontal Y samples, there is one Cb and Cr sample. Each sample is typically 8 bits (consumer applications) or 10 bits (professional editing applications) per component.

The 4:2:2 to 4:4:4 conversion consists of generating interpolated Cb and Cr data for those Y samples that have no Cb and Cr data. Although complex interpolation filtering is specified in BT.601, most NTSC and PAL video decoder chips (such as the HMP8115) use simple linear interpolation. This is usually acceptable since the bandwidth of the color data is 0.6MHz-1.3MHz, rather than the 3.375MHz bandwidth specified by BT.601.

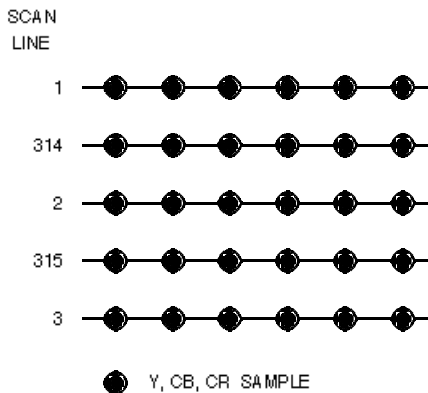


FIGURE 1. 4:4:4 YCbCr SAMPLING STRUCTURE FOR A 625-LINE INTERLACED SYSTEM

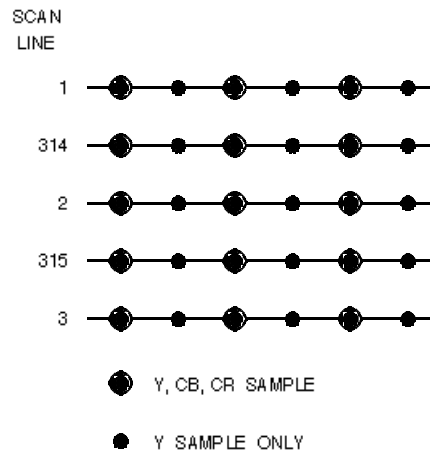


FIGURE 2. 4:2:2 YCbCr SAMPLING STRUCTURE FOR A 625-LINE INTERLACED SYSTEM

R'G'B' Generation

BT.601 defines Y to have a nominal range of 16-235 (black-white); Cb and Cr are defined to have a nominal range of 16-240, with 128 corresponding to zero. YCbCr is also defined to have been derived from gamma-corrected RGB (R'G'B') data.

The BT.601 equations are used by many video ICs to convert between digital R'G'B' data and YCbCr are:

$$\begin{aligned} Y &= (77/256)R' + (150/256)G' + (29/256)B' \\ Cb &= -(44/256)R' - (87/256)G' + (131/256)B' + 128 \\ Cr &= (131/256)R' - (110/256)G' - (21/256)B' + 128 \\ R' &= Y + 1.371(Cr - 128) \\ G' &= Y - 0.698(Cr - 128) - 0.336(Cb - 128) \\ B' &= Y + 1.732(Cb - 128) \end{aligned}$$

When performing YCbCr to R'G'B' conversion using the above equations, note that the resulting R'G'B' values have a nominal range of 16-235 (black-white). Occasional excursions into the 0-15 and 236-255 values are possible due to Y and CbCr occasionally going outside the 16-235 and 16-240 ranges, respectively, due to video processing, rounding errors, and noise.

However, if the 24-bit R'G'B' data are to have a range of 0-255 (black-white), as is commonly found in PCs, the following equations (used by the HMP8115) should be used to maintain the correct black and white levels:

$$\begin{aligned} Y &= 0.257R' + 0.504G' + 0.098B' + 16 \\ Cb &= -0.148R' - 0.291G' + 0.439B' + 128 \\ Cr &= 0.439R' - 0.368G' - 0.071B' + 128 \\ R' &= 1.164(Y - 16) + 1.596(Cr - 128) \\ G' &= 1.164(Y - 16) - 0.813(Cr - 128) - \\ &\quad 0.392(Cb - 128) \\ B' &= 1.164(Y - 16) + 2.017(Cb - 128) \end{aligned}$$

For the YCbCr to R'G'B' equations, the R'G'B' values must be saturated at the 0 and 255 levels due to occasional excursions outside the nominal YCbCr ranges.

Linear RGB Generation

PCs usually prefer to use the linear RGB data format due to the amount of software already written and the simplified algorithms. Gamma correction for the display monitor may then be done real-time in the GUI acceleration chip. Therefore, it may be desirable to remove the gamma information from the R'G'B' data.

NTSC video is pre-corrected using a gamma of 2.2. Thus, to generate 24-bit linear RGB data:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{for } (R', G', B') < 21 \\ R &= ((R'/255) / 4.5) * 255 \\ G &= ((G'/255) / 4.5) * 255 \\ B &= ((B'/255) / 4.5) * 255 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{for } (R', G', B') \geq 21 \\ R &= 255 * (((R'/255) + 0.099) / 1.099)^{2.2} \\ G &= 255 * (((G'/255) + 0.099) / 1.099)^{2.2} \\ B &= 255 * (((B'/255) + 0.099) / 1.099)^{2.2} \end{aligned}$$

PAL video specifies a gamma of 2.8, although a value of 2.2 is now commonly used. If the video is pre-corrected using a gamma of 2.8, the following equations may be used to generate 24-bit linear RGB data:

$$\begin{aligned} R &= 255 * (R'/255)^{2.8} \\ G &= 255 * (G'/255)^{2.8} \\ B &= 255 * (B'/255)^{2.8} \end{aligned}$$

Many modern PAL video decoders, such as the HMP8115, allow the selection of either the 2.2 or 2.8 gamma factor to be used for calculations.

Summary

This Application Note discusses some of the considerations for converting YCbCr video data to digital RGB. To ensure proper black and white levels for the PC environment, the basic BT.601 YCbCr to RGB equations should be slightly modified to generate the full 0-255 RGB range. The generation of linear RGB data should also be optional, and is easily implemented.

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Renesas Electronics America Inc.
1001 Murphy Ranch Road, Milpitas, CA 95035, U.S.A.
Tel: +1-408-432-8888, Fax: +1-408-434-5351

Renesas Electronics Canada Limited
9251 Yonge Street, Suite 8309 Richmond Hill, Ontario Canada L4C 9T3
Tel: +1-905-237-2004

Renesas Electronics Europe Limited
Dukes Meadow, Millboard Road, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, SL8 5FH, U.K
Tel: +44-1628-651-700, Fax: +44-1628-651-804

Renesas Electronics Europe GmbH
Arcadiastrasse 10, 40472 Düsseldorf, Germany
Tel: +49-211-6503-0, Fax: +49-211-6503-1327

Renesas Electronics (China) Co., Ltd.
Room 1709 Quantum Plaza, No.27 ZhichunLu, Haidian District, Beijing, 100191 P. R. China
Tel: +86-10-8235-1155, Fax: +86-10-8235-7679

Renesas Electronics (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.
Unit 301, Tower A, Central Towers, 555 Langao Road, Putuo District, Shanghai, 200333 P. R. China
Tel: +86-21-2226-0888, Fax: +86-21-2226-0999

Renesas Electronics Hong Kong Limited
Unit 1601-1611, 16/F., Tower 2, Grand Century Place, 193 Prince Edward Road West, Mongkok, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel: +852-2265-6688, Fax: +852-2886-9022

Renesas Electronics Taiwan Co., Ltd.
13F, No. 363, Fu Shing North Road, Taipei 10543, Taiwan
Tel: +886-2-8175-9600, Fax: +886-2-8175-9670

Renesas Electronics Singapore Pte. Ltd.
80 Bendemeer Road, Unit #06-02 Hyflux Innovation Centre, Singapore 339949
Tel: +65-6213-0200, Fax: +65-6213-0300

Renesas Electronics Malaysia Sdn.Bhd.
Unit 1207, Block B, Menara Amcorp, Amcorp Trade Centre, No. 18, Jln Persiaran Barat, 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: +60-3-7955-9390, Fax: +60-3-7955-9510

Renesas Electronics India Pvt. Ltd.
No.777C, 100 Feet Road, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560 038, India
Tel: +91-80-67208700, Fax: +91-80-67208777

Renesas Electronics Korea Co., Ltd.
17F, KAMCO Yangjae Tower, 262, Gangnam-daero, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, 06265 Korea
Tel: +82-2-558-3737, Fax: +82-2-558-5338