VOL. 2

Charles Platt with Fredrik Jansson

Encyclopedia of Electronic Components

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Encyclopedia of Electronic Components Volume 2

Charles Platt
with Fredrik Jansson

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Encyclopedia of Electronic Components Volume 2

by Charles Platt
with Fredrik Jansson

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[TI]

In fond memory of my father, Maurice Platt

Table of Contents

How to Use This Book

This is the second of three volumes. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the most commonly used electronic components, for reference by students, engineers, hobbyists, and instructors. While you can find much of this information dispersed among datasheets, introductory books, websites, and technical resources maintained by manufacturers, the *Encyclopedia of Electronic Components* gathers all the relevant facts in one place, properly organized and verified, including details that may be hard to find elsewhere. Each entry includes typical applications, possible substitutions, cross-references to similar devices, sample schematics, and a list of common problems and errors.

You can find a more detailed rationale for this encyclopedia in the Preface to Volume 1.

Volume Contents

Practical considerations influenced the decision to divide this encyclopedia into three volumes. Each deals with broad subject areas as follows.

Volume 1

Power; electromagnetic devices; discrete semiconductors

The *power* category includes sources of electricity and methods to distribute, store, interrupt, convert, and regulate power. The *electromagnetic devices* category includes devices that exert force linearly, and others that create a turning force. *Discrete semiconductors* include the primary types of diodes and transistors. A contents listing for Volume 1 appears in Figure P-1.

Volume 2

Thyristors (SCRs, diacs, and triacs); integrated circuits; light sources, indicators, and displays; and sound sources

Integrated circuits are divided into analog and digital components. *Light sources, indicators, and displays* are divided into reflective displays, single sources of light, and displays that emit light. *Sound sources* are divided into those that create sound, and those that reproduce sound. A contents listing for Volume 2 appears in Figure P-2.

Volume 3

Sensing devices

The field of sensors has become so extensive, they easily merit a volume to themselves. *Sensing devices* include those that detect light, sound, heat, motion, pressure, gas, humidity, orientation, electricity, proximity, force, and radiation.

At the time of writing, Volume 3 is still in preparation, while Volume 1 is complete and is available in a variety of formats.

Primary Category	Secondary Category	Component Type
power	source	battery
	connection	jumper
		fuse
		pushbutton
		switch
		rotary switch
		rotational encoder
	moderation	relay
		resistor
		potentiometer
		capacitor
		variable capacitor
	conversion	inductor
		AC-AC transformer
		AC-DC power supply
		DC-DC converter
		DC-AC inverter
	regulation	voltage regulator
electro-magnetism	linear output	electromagnet
		solenoid
	rotational output	DC motor
		AC motor
		servo motor
		stepper motor
discrete semi-conductor	single junction	diode
		unijunction transistor
	multi-junction	bipolar transistor
		field-effect transistor

Figure P-1. *The subject-oriented organization of categories and entries in Volume 1.*

Primary Category	Secondary Category	Component Type
discrete semi-conductor	thyristor	SCR
		diac
		triac
integrated circuit	analog	solid-state relay
		optocoupler
		comparator
		op-amp
		digital potentiometer
		timer
	digital	logic gate
		flip-flop
		shift register
		counter
		encoder
		decoder
		multiplexer
light source, indicator or display	reflective	LCD
	single source	incandescent lamp
		neon bulb
		fluorescent light
		laser
		LED indicator
		LED area lighting
	multi-source or panel	LED display
		vacuum-fluorescent
		electroluminescence
sound source	audio alert	transducer
		audio indicator
	reproducer	headphone
		speaker

Figure P-2. *The subject-oriented organization of categories and entries in Volume 2.*

Organization

Reference versus Tutorial

As its title suggests, this is a reference book, not a tutorial. A tutorial begins with elementary concepts and builds sequentially toward concepts that are more advanced. A reference book assumes that you may dip into the text at any point, learn what you need to know, and then put the book aside. If you choose to read it straight through from beginning to end, you will find some repetition, as each entry is intended to be self-sufficient, requiring minimal reference to other entries.

My books *Make: Electronics* and *Make: More Electronics* follow a tutorial approach. They don't go into as much depth as this Encyclopedia, because a tutorial inevitably allocates a lot of space to step-by-step explanations and instructions.

Theory and Practice

This book is oriented toward practicality rather than theory. I assume that the reader mostly wants to know how to use electronic components, rather than why they work the way they do. Consequently, I have not included proofs of formulae or definitions rooted in electrical theory. Units are defined only to the extent necessary to avoid confusion.

Many books on electronics theory already exist, if theory is of interest to you.

Entries

This encyclopedia is divided into entries, each entry being devoted to one broad type of component. Two rules determine whether a component has an entry all to itself, or is subsumed into another entry:

Rule 1

> A component merits its own entry if it is (a) widely used, or (b) not so widely used but has a unique identity and maybe some historical status. The **bipolar transistor** entry is an example of a widely used component, whereas the **unijunction transistor** entry is an example of a not so widely used component with a unique identity.

Rule 2

> A component does not merit its own entry if it is (a) seldom used, or (b) very similar in function to another component that is more widely used. For example, a *rheostat* is subsumed into the **potentiometer** section, while *silicon diode*, *Zener diode*, and *germanium diode* are combined together in the **diode** entry.

Inevitably, these guidelines required judgment calls which in some cases may seem arbitrary. My ultimate decision was based on where I would expect to find a component if I was looking for it myself.

Subject Paths

Entries are not organized alphabetically. They are grouped by subject, in much the same way that books in the nonfiction section of some libraries are organized by the Dewey Decimal System. This is convenient if you don't know exactly what you are looking for, or if you don't know all the options that may be available to perform a task that you have in mind.

Each primary category is divided into subcategories, and the subcategories are divided into component types. This hierarchy is shown in Figure P-2. It is also apparent when you look at the top of the first page of each entry, where you will find the path that leads to it. The **diac** entry, for instance, is headed with this path:

discrete semiconductor > thyristor > diac

Any classification scheme will run into exceptions. You can buy a chip containing a *resistor array*, for instance. Technically, this is an *analog integrated circuit*, but a decision was made to put it in the **resistor** section of Volume 1, because it can be directly substituted for a group of resistors.

Some components have hybrid functions. A **multiplexer**, for instance, may pass analog signals and may have "analog" in its name. However, it is digitally controlled and is mostly used in conjunction with other digital integrated circuits. This seemed to justify placing it in the digital category.

Inclusions and Exclusions

There is also the question of what is, and is not, a component. Is wire a component? Not for the purposes of this encyclopedia. How about a **DC-DC converter**? Because converters are now sold in small packages by component suppliers, they are included in Volume 1 as components.

Many similar decisions had to be made on a case-by-case basis. Some readers will disagree with the outcome, but reconciling all the disagreements would have been impossible. The best I could do was to create a book which is organized in the way that would suit me best if I were using it myself.

Typographical Conventions

Within each entry, **bold type** is used for the first occurrence of the name of a component that has its own entry elsewhere. Other important electronics terms or component names may be presented in *italics*.

The names of components, and the categories to which they belong, are all set in lowercase type, except where a term is normally capitalized because it is an acronym or a trademark. The term *Trimpot*, for instance, is trademarked by Bourns, but *trimmer* is not. **LED** is an acronym, but *cap* (abbreviation for **capacitor**) is not.

The European convention for representing fractional component values eliminates decimal points. Thus, values such as 3.3K and 4.7K are expressed as 3K3 and 4K7. This style has not been adopted to a significant degree in the United States, and is not used in this encyclopedia.

In mathematical formulae, I have used the style that is common in programming languages. The * (asterisk) is used as a multiplication symbol, while the / (forward slash) is used as a division symbol. Where some terms are in parentheses, they must be dealt with first. Where parentheses are inside parentheses, the innermost ones must be dealt with first. So, in this example:

```
A = 30 / (7 + (4 * 2) )
```

You would begin by multiplying 4 times 2, to get 8; then add 7, to get 15; then divide that into 30, to get the value for A, which is 2.

Visual Conventions

Figure P-3 shows the conventions that are used in the schematics in this book. A black dot always indicates a connection, except that to minimize ambiguity, the configuration at top right is avoided, and the configuration at top center is used instead. Conductors that cross each other without a black dot do not make a connection. The styles at bottom right are sometimes seen elsewhere, but are not used here.

All the schematics are formatted with pale blue backgrounds. This enables components such as switches, transistors, and LEDs to be highlighted in white, drawing attention to them and clarifying the boundary of the component. The white areas have no other meaning.

Photographic Backgrounds

All photographs of components include a background grid that is divided into squares measuring 0.1". Although the grid is virtual, it is equivalent in scale to physical graph paper placed immediately behind the component. If the component is photographed at an angle, the grid may be reproduced at a similar angle, creating perspective on the squares.

Background colors in photographs were chosen for contrast with the colors of the components, or for visual variety. They have no other significance.

Component Availability

Because there is no way of knowing if a component may have a long production run, this encyclopedia is cautious about listing specific part numbers. To find a specific part that has a narrow function, searching the websites maintained by suppliers will be necessary. The following suppliers were checked frequently during the preparation of the book:

- Mouser Electronics
- Jameco Electronics

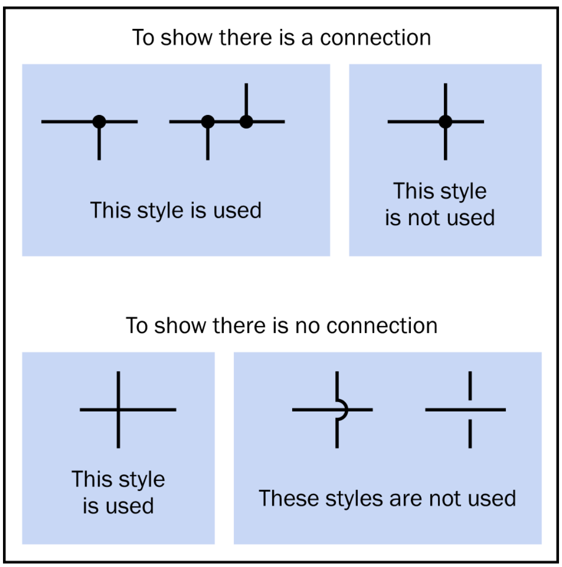

Figure P-3. *Visual conventions that are used in the schematics in this book.*

When seeking obsolete parts, or those that are nearing the end of their commercial life, eBay can be very useful.

Issues and Errata

If you believe you have found an error in this book, you will find guidance on how to report it here: *http://bit.ly/eec_v2_errata*.

Before posting your own erratum, please check those that have been submitted previously, to see if someone else already reported it.

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We have a web page for this book, where we list errata, examples, and any additional information. You can access this page at: *http://bit.ly/encyclopedia_of_electronic_components_v2*.

Acknowledgments

Any reference work draws inspiration from many sources. Datasheets and tutorials maintained by component manufacturers were considered the most trustworthy sources of information online. In addition, component retailers, college texts, crowd-sourced reference works, and hobbyist sites were used. The following books provided useful information:

Boylestad, Robert L. and Nashelsky, Louis: *Electronic Devices and Circuit Theory*, 9th edition. Pearson Education, 2006.

Braga, Newton C.: *CMOS Sourcebook*. Sams Technical Publishing, 2001.

Hoenig, Stuart A.: *How to Build and Use Electronic Devices Without Frustration, Panic, Mountains of Money, or an Engineering Degree*, 2nd edition. Little, Brown, 1980.

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Predko, Mike: *123 Robotics Experiments for the Evil Genius*. McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Scherz, Paul: *Practical Electronics for Inventors*, 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill, 2007.

Williams, Tim: *The Circuit Designer's Companion*, 2nd edition. Newnes, 2005.

I also made extensive use of information on vendor sites, especially:

- Mouser Electronics
- Jameco Electronics
- All Electronics
- sparkfun
- Electronic Goldmine
- Adafruit
- Parallax, Inc.

In addition, some individuals provided special assistance. My editor, Brian Jepson, was immensely helpful in the development of this book. Philipp Marek and Steve Conklin reviewed the text for errors. My publisher demonstrated faith in my work. Kevin Kelly unwittingly influenced me with his legendary interest in "access to tools." It was Mark Frauenfelder who originally brought me back to the pleasures of building things, and Gareth Branwyn who revived my interest in electronics.

Lastly, I should mention my school friends from decades ago: Patrick Fagg, Hugh Levinson, Graham Rogers, William Edmondson, and John Witty, who helped me to feel that it was OK to be a nerd building my own audio equipment, long before the word "nerd" actually existed.

—Charles Platt, 2014

SCR

1

The acronym **SCR** is derived from *silicon-controlled rectifier*, which is a gate-triggered type of *thyristor*. A thyristor is defined here as a semiconductor having four or more alternating layers of p-type and n-type silicon. Because it predated integrated circuits, and in its basic form consists of a single multilayer semiconductor, a thyristor is considered to be a discrete component in this encyclopedia. When a thyristor is combined with other components in one package (as in a **solid-state relay**), it is considered to be an integrated circuit.

Other types of thyristor are the **diac** and **triac**, each of which has its own entry.

Thyristor variants that are not so widely used, such as the *gate turn-off thyristor (GTO)* and *silicon-controlled switch (SCS)*, do not have entries here.

OTHER RELATED COMPONENTS

- **diac** (see Chapter 2)
- **triac** (see Chapter 3)

What It Does

In the 1920s, the *thyratron* was a gas-filled tube that functioned as a switch and a rectifier. In 1956, General Electric introduced a solid-state version of it under the name *thyristor*. In both cases, the names were derived from the thyroid gland in the human body, which controls the rate of consumption of energy. The thyratron and, subsequently, the thyristor enabled control of large flows of current.

The **SCR** (silicon-controlled rectifier) is a type of thyristor, although the two terms are often used as if they are synonymous. Text that refers loosely to a thyristor may actually be discussing an SCR, and vice versa. In this encyclopedia, the **SCR**, **diac**, and **triac** are all considered to be variant types of thyristor.

An SCR is a solid-state switch that in many instances can pass high currents at high voltages. Like a **bipolar transistor**, it is triggered by voltage applied to a gate. Unlike the transistor, it allows the flow of current to continue even when the gate voltage diminishes to zero.

How It Works

This component is designed to pass current in one direction only. It can be forced to conduct in the opposite direction if the reversed potential exceeds its *breakdown voltage*, but this mistreatment is likely to cause damage.

By comparison, the diac and triac are designed to be bidirectional.

The SCR has three leads, identified as anode, cathode, and gate. Two functionally identical versions of the schematic symbol are shown in Figure 1-1. Early versions sometimes included a circle drawn around them, but this style has become obsolete. Care must be taken to distinguish between the SCR symbol and the symbol that represents a **programmable unijunction transistor** (PUT), shown in Figure 1-2.

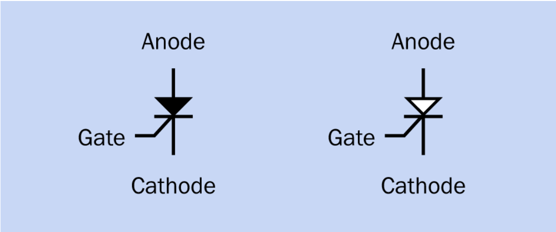

Figure 1-1. *Two functionally identical schematic symbols for an SCR (silicon-controlled rectifier). The symbol on the left is more common.*

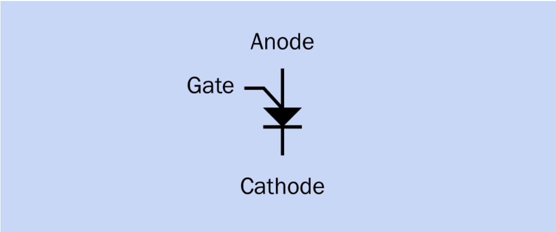

Figure 1-2. *The symbol shown here is for a programmable unijunction transistor (PUT). Care must be taken to distinguish it from the symbol for an SCR.*

Switching Behavior

When the SCR is in its passive or nonconductive state, it will block current in either direction between anode and cathode, although a very small amount of *leakage* typically occurs. When the SCR is activated by a positive voltage at the gate, current can now flow from anode to cathode, although it is still blocked from cathode to anode. When the flow reaches a level known as the *latching current*, the flow will continue even after the triggering voltage drops to zero. This behavior causes it to be known as a *regenerative* device.

If the current between anode and cathode starts to diminish while the gate voltage remains zero, the current flow will continue below the latching level until it falls below the value known as the *holding current*. The flow now ceases. Thus, the only way to end a flow of current that has been initiated through an SCR is by reducing the flow or attempting to reverse it.

Note that the self-sustaining flow is a function of current rather than voltage.

Unlike a transistor, an SCR is either "on" or "off" and does not function as a *current amplifier*. Like a diode, it is designed to conduct current in one direction; hence the term *rectifier* in its full name. When it has been triggered, the impedance between its anode and cathode is sufficiently low that heat dissipation can be managed even at high power levels.

The ability of SCRs to pass relatively large amounts of current makes them suitable for controlling the power supplied to motors and resistive heating elements. The fast switching response also enables an SCR to interrupt and abbreviate each positive phase of an AC waveform, to reduce the average power supplied. This is known as *phase control*.

SCRs are also used to provide *overvoltage protection*.

SCR packages reflect their design for a wide range of voltages and currents. Figure 1-3 shows an SCR designed for on-state current of 4A RMS (i.e., measured as the root mean square of the alternating current). Among its applications are small-engine ignition and *crowbar* overvoltage protection, so named because it shorts a power supply directly to ground, much like a crowbar being dropped across the terminals of a car battery (but hopefully with a less dramatic outcome). See Figure 1-15.

In Figure 1-4, the SCR can handle up to 800V repetitive peak off-state voltage and 55A RMS. Possible applications include AC rectification, crowbar protection, welding, and battery charging. The component in Figure 1-5 is rated for 25A and 50V repetitive peak off-state voltage. To assess the component sizes, bear in mind that the graph line spacing is 0.1".

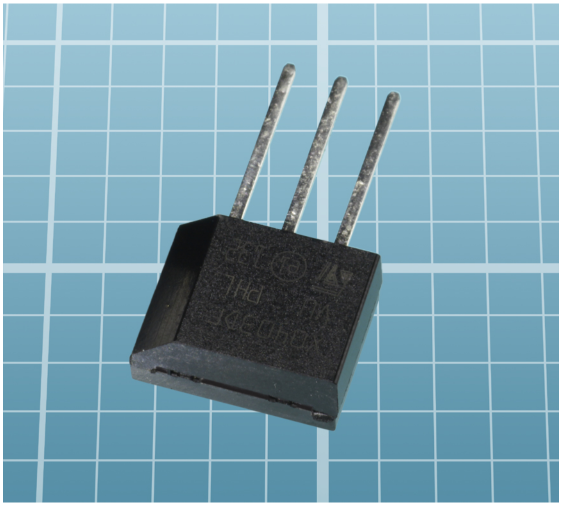

Figure 1-3. *SCR rated for 400V repetitive off-state voltage, no greater than 4A RMS.*

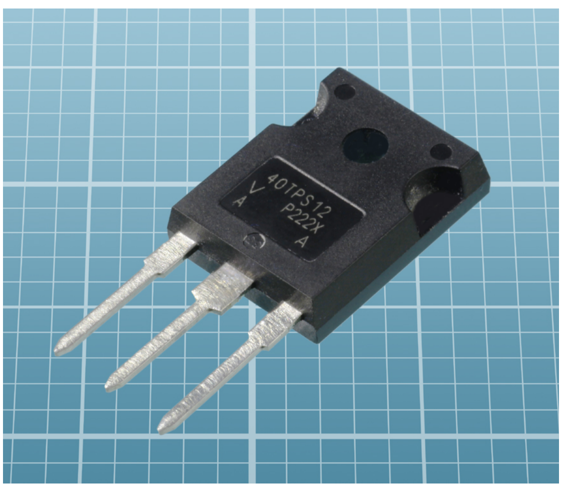

Figure 1-4. *SCR rated for 800V repetitive off-state voltage, no greater than 55A RMS.*

Internal Configuration

The function of an SCR can be imagined as being similar to that of a PNP transistor paired with an NPN transistor, as shown in Figure 1-6. In this simplified schematic, so long as zero voltage is applied to the "gate" wire, the lower (NPN) transistor remains nonconductive. Consequently, the upper (PNP) transistor cannot sink current, and this transistor also remains nonconductive.

When voltage is applied to the "gate," the lower transistor starts to sink current from the upper transistor. This switches it on. The two transistors now continue to conduct even if power to the "gate" is disconnected, because they have created a positive feedback loop.

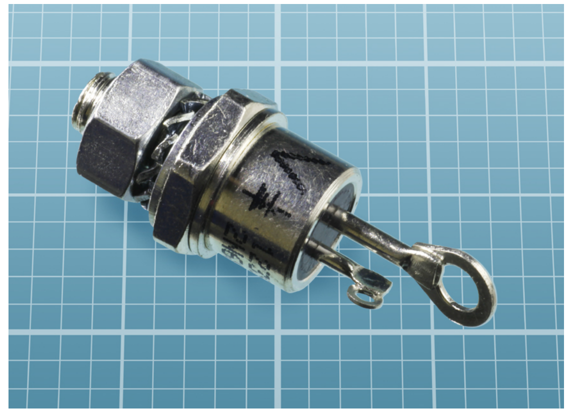

Figure 1-5. *Stud-packaged SCR rated for 50V repetitive off-state voltage, no greater than 25A RMS.*

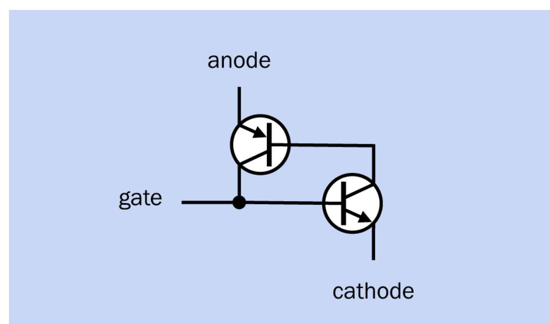

Figure 1-6. *An SCR behaves similarly to an NPN and a PNP transistor coupled together.*

Figure 1-7 shows the same two transistors in simplified form as sandwiches of p-type and n-type silicon layers (on the left), and their combination in an SCR (on the right). Although the actual configuration of silicon segments is not as simple or as linear as this diagram suggests, the SCR can be described correctly as a *PNPN device*.

An SCR is comparable with an electromagnetic **latching relay**, except that it works much faster and more reliably.

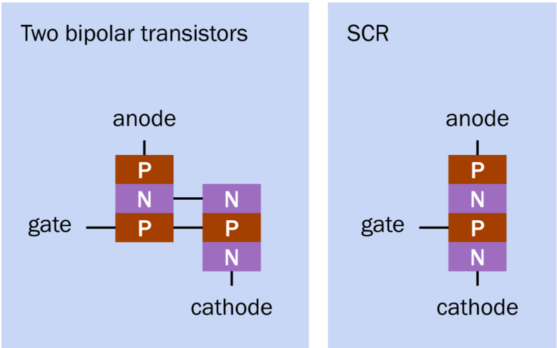

Figure 1-7. *The two transistors from the previous figure are shown here in simplified form as two stacks of p-type and n-type silicon layers. These layers are combined in an SCR, on the right.*

Breakdown and Breakover Voltage

The curves in Figure 1-8 illustrate the behavior of a hypothetical SCR, and can be compared with the curves shown for a diac in Figure 2-5 and a triac in Figure 3-10. Beginning with zero voltage applied between anode and cathode, and zero current flowing (i.e., at the center origin of the graph), if we apply a voltage at the anode that is increasingly negative relative to the cathode (i.e., we attempt to force the SCR to allow negative current flow), we see a small amount of leakage, indicated by the darker blue area (which is not drawn to scale). Finally the *breakdown voltage* is reached, at which point the negative potential overcomes the SCR and its impedance drops rapidly, allowing a surge of current to flow, probably damaging it.

Alternatively, starting once again from the center, if we apply a voltage at the anode that is increasingly positive relative to the cathode, two consequences are possible. The dashed curve assumes that there is zero voltage at the gate, and shows that some leakage occurs until the applied potential at the anode reaches the *breakover voltage*, at which point the SCR allows a large current flow, which continues even when the voltage decreases.

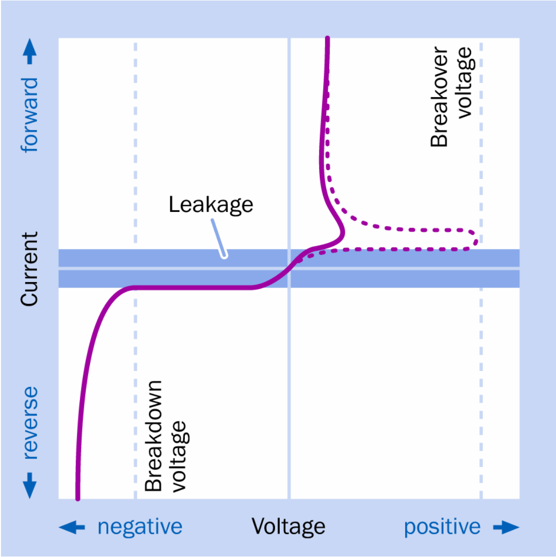

Figure 1-8. *The solid curve shows current passing between the anode and cathode of a hypothetical SCR for varying voltages, while a triggering voltage is applied to the gate. The dashed curve assumes that no triggering voltage is applied to the gate.*

In practice, the SCR is intended to respond to a positive gate voltage. Under these circumstances, its behavior is shown by the solid curve in the top-right quadrant in Figure 1-8. The SCR begins to conduct current without having to reach the breakover voltage at the anode.

- When used as it is intended, the SCR should not reach breakdown or breakover voltage levels.

SCR Concept Demo

In Figure 1-9, pushbutton S1 applies voltage to the gate of the SCR, which puts the SCR in self-sustaining conductive mode. When S1 is released, the meter will show that current continues to pass between the anode and the cathode. The X0403DF SCR suggested for this circuit has a holding current of 5mA, which a 5VDC supply should be able to provide with the 1K resistor in the circuit. If necessary, this resistor can be reduced to 680Ω.

Now if pushbutton S2 is pressed, the flow is interrupted. When S2 is released, the flow will not resume. Alternatively, if pushbutton S3 is pressed while the SCR is conducting current, the flow is diverted around the SCR, and when the pushbutton is released, the flow through the SCR will not resume. Thus, the SCR can be shut down either by a normally closed pushbutton in series with it (which will interrupt the current), or a normally open pushbutton in parallel with it (which will divert the current).

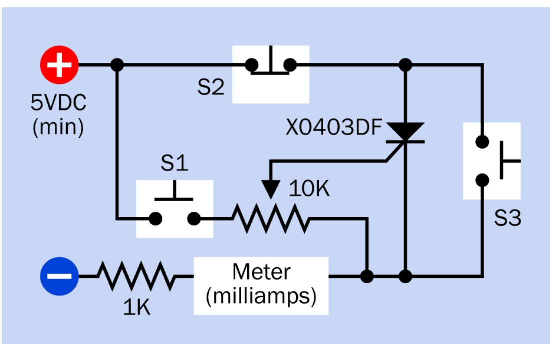

Figure 1-9. *In this test circuit, S1 triggers the SCR, while S2 or S3 will stop it. See text for additional details.*

The test circuit is shown installed on a breadboard in Figure 1-10. In this photograph, the red and blue wires supply a minimum of 5VDC. The two red buttons are tactile switches, the one at top left being S1 in the schematic while the one at bottom right is S3. The large switch with a rectangular button is S2; this is normally closed, and opens when pressed. The X0403DF SCR is just below it and to the right. The square blue trimmer is set to the midpoint of its range.

AC Current Applications

If the SCR is used with alternating current, it stops conducting during each negative cycle, and is retriggered in each positive cycle. This suggests one of its primary applications, as a controllable rectifier that can switch rapidly enough to limit the amount of current that passes through it during each cycle.

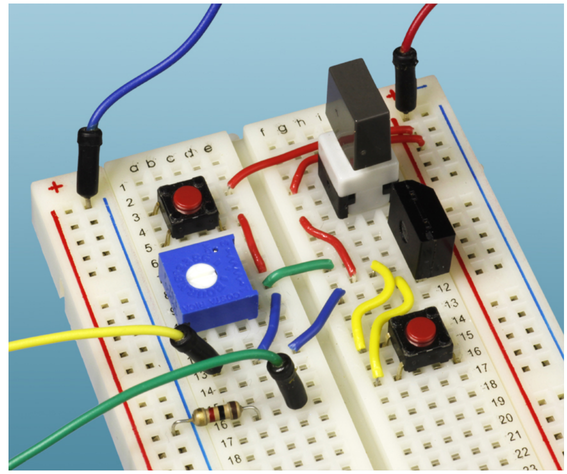

Figure 1-10. *A breadboarded version of the SCR test circuit. The two red buttons correspond with S1 and S3 in the schematic, while the large rectangular button at top right opens S2. See text for details.*

Variants

SCRs are available in surface-mount, through-hole, and stud packages, to handle increasing currents and voltages. Some special-purpose SCRs can control currents of hundreds of amps, while high-power SCRs are used to switch thousands of amps at more than 10,000V in power distribution systems. They are too specialized for inclusion in this encyclopedia.

Typical power ratings for SCRs in general use are summarized in the next section.

Values

Any SCR will impose a forward voltage drop, which typically ranges from around 1V to 2V, depending on the component.

Because SCRs are often used to modify AC waveforms, the current that the component can pass is usually expressed as the root mean square (RMS) of its peak value.