The LTC®1096 and LTC1098 are the lowest power, most compact, sampling analog-to-digital converters in the world. These new 8-bit micropower, sampling ADCs typically draw 100μA of supply current when sampling at 33kHz. Supply current drops linearly as the sample rate is reduced as shown in Figure 1. At a 1kHz sample rate, the supply current is only 3μA. The ADCs automatically power down when not performing conversions, drawing only leakage current.

They are packaged in 8-pin SO packages and operate on 3V to 9V supplies or batteries. Both are fabricated on Linear Technology’s proprietary LTBiCMOS™ process.

Two Micropower ADCs

The LTC1096 and LTC1098 use a switched-capacitor, successive-approximation (SAR) architecture. Micropower operation is achieved through three design innovations:

1. An architecture which automatically powers up and down as conversions are requested
2. An ultralow power comparator design, and
3. The use of a proprietary BiCMOS process.

Although they share the same basic design, the LTC1096 and LTC1098 differ in some respects. The LTC1096 has a differential input and has an external reference input pin. It can measure signals floating on a DC common-mode voltage and can operate with reduced spans down to 250mV. Reducing the span allows it to achieve 1mV resolution. The LTC1098 has a 2-channel input multiplexer and can convert either channel with respect to ground or the difference between the two.

Longer Battery Life

Tremendous gains in battery life are possible because of the wide supply voltage range, the low supply current, and the automatic power shut down between conversions. Eliminating the voltage regulator and operating directly off the battery saves the power lost in the regulator. At a sample rate of 1kHz, the 3μA supply current is below the self-discharge rate of many batteries. As an example, the circuit of Figure 2, sampling at 1kHz, will run off a Panasonic CR1632 3V lithium coin cell for five years.

The automatic shutdown has great advantages over the alternative of high side switching a higher power ADC, shown in Figure 3. First, no switching signal or hardware is required. Second, power consumption is

---

Figure 1. Automatic Power Shutdown Between Conversions Allows Power Consumption to Drop with Sample Rate

Figure 2. Sampling at 1kHz, This Circuit Draws Only 3μA and Will Run Off a 120mAh CR1632 3V Lithium Coin Cell For 5 Years

Figure 3. High Side Switching a Power-Hungry ADC Wastes Power. Repeatedly Switching the Required Bypass Capacitor Consumes 500μA Even When Taking Readings at Only 10Hz
orders of magnitude lower with the LTC1096/LTC1098. This is because, when an ADC is high side switched, the current consumed in charging the required bypass capacitor is large, even at very low sample rates. In fact, a 10μF bypass capacitor, high side switched at only 10Hz, will consume 500μA!

A/D Conversion for 3V Systems
The LTC1096/LTC1098 are ideal for 3V systems. Figure 4 shows a 3V to 6V battery current monitor which draws only 70μA from the battery it monitors. The battery current is sensed with the 0.02Ω resistor and amplified by the LT®1178. The LTC1096 digitizes the amplifier output and sends it to the microprocessor in serial format. The LT1004 provides the full-scale reference for the ADC. The other half of the LTC1178 is used to provide low battery detection. The circuit’s 70μA supply current is dominated by the op amps and the reference. The circuit can be located near the battery and data transmitted serially to the microprocessor.

Smaller Instrument Size
The LTC1096 and LTC1098 can save board space in compact designs in a number of ways. The SO-8 package saves space. Operating the ADC directly off batteries can eliminate the space taken by a voltage regulator. The LTC1096/LTC1098 can also operate with small, 0.1μF or 0.01μF chip bypass capacitors. The serial I/O requires fewer PC traces and fewer microprocessor pins than a parallel-port ADC. Connecting the ADC directly to sensors can eliminate op amps and gain stages. Finally, the ADCs do not need an external sample-and-hold.

AC and DC Performance
The LTC1096/LTC1098 are offered with ±0.5LSB total unadjusted error for applications that require DC accuracy. The ADCs also have a lot to offer in designs that require AC performance.

Figure 5 shows remarkable sampling performance for a device that draws only 100μA running at full speed. Dynamic performance of 7.5 effective bits is maintained up to an input frequency of over 40kHz.

In undersampling applications, this 40kHz input bandwidth remains intact as the sample rate (and power consumption) are reduced. A 40kHz waveform can be undersampled at 1kHz with 7.5 bits of accuracy on a supply current of 3μA!

Conclusion
Extremely low power consumption, 3V operation, small size and other benefits will help the LTC1096 and LTC1098 find their way into a variety of micropower, low voltage, battery-powered and compact systems. For more information, refer to the LTC1096/LTC1098 data sheet, Linear Technology Magazine (Volume II Number 1) and application notes.

Figure 4. This 0A to 2A Battery Current Monitor Draws Only 70μA from a 3V to 6V Battery

Figure 5. Dynamic Accuracy Is Maintained Up to an Input Frequency of Over 40kHz