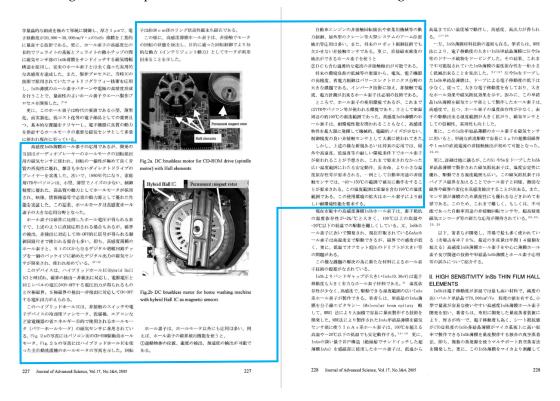
Recent advances in semiconductor thin film magnetic sensors and development of applications

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(The following is an excerpt from the boxed text, translated into English.)



Although it is an application of a high-sensitivity InSb thin-film Hall element, it was initially used in a magnetic sensor for detecting the rotation of the Hall motor of an audio player, and a direct-drive player with extremely good rotation uniformity, excellent sound quality reproducibility, and low noise was realized. Then, in the 1980s, Hall motors were adopted as high-quality power for home VTRs and personal computers with small size, low noise, and excellent control accuracy, and demonstrated excellent performance as an essential power source for video and information equipment. As a result, Hall motors have become a major application area for highly sensitive Hall elements.

Hall elements are devices that obtain Hall voltage proportional to the magnetic field, and are sometimes directly applied as described above, but they are often used with control circuits that can obtain signals ON-OFF in response to magnetic field detection and non-detection. In other words, a magnetic sensor with digital output that consists of a high-sensitivity thin-film Hall element and a digital amplification circuit chip consisting of a Si IC in a single

package has been developed and has begun to be used. 10~12

This device is called a hybrid hall IC, and there are two types of outputs that can be ON-OFF for detection and non-detection of magnetic fields, and ON-OFF outputs for detection and non-detection of N-pole magnetic fields and S-pole magnetic fields. The same level of voltage is output as the supply voltage.

This high-rated Hall IC is widely used in magnetic sensors for Hall motors (power Hall motors) used for energy-saving purposes in home appliances such as non-contact switches and cooling fan motors for electronic devices, washing machines, and air conditioners. The photo in Fig. 2a shows a Hall motor for CD-ROM drive for a personal computer, and the photo in Fig. 2b shows a Hall motor for a fully automatic washing machine using a hybrid Hall IC. The rotor is a ring-shaped high-performance permanent magnet with a diameter of about 30 cm. In this way, the high-sensitivity thin-film Hall element detects the rotation state of the motor without contact, and shows that the motor can be used as a more intelligent power delivery system with purpose-oriented rotation control.

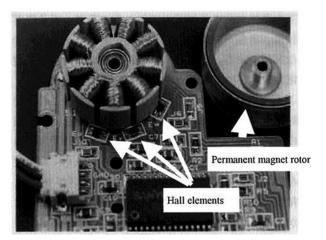


Fig.2a. DC brushless motor for CD-ROM drive (spindle motor) with Hall elements

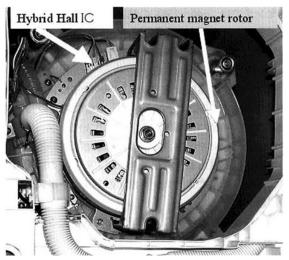


Fig.2b DC brushless motor for home washing machine with hybrid Hall IC as magnetic sensors

Hall elements have many applications other than Hall motors. For example, if you use the magnetic field detection function of the Hall element,

(1) It can detect the position, velocity and acceleration of moving objects.

It has many applications, such as non-contact rotation detection of automobile engines, power control of industrial machinery, and arm position detection of large systems such as outdoor cranes. It is also a non-contact sensor that is indispensable for future robot control technology. Furthermore, using a Hall element that can directly detect magnetic flux density (2) Non-contact detection of transient current, including DC, is possible.

Due to the need to reduce environmental impact in the future, high-precision and powersaving control of electrical and electronic equipment is a major issue in the field of power electronics. In addition to inverter technology, Hall elements that can measure current and power without contact are essential technologies.

By the way, the environment in which Hall elements are used has been the environment where VTRs and personal computers are used, and the temperature range is mainly about 100°C around room temperature. Hall elements of high-sensitivity InSb thin films have been used in large quantities as highly accurate non-contact sensors with low mechanical and electromagnetic noise by maximizing their high sensitivity characteristics without being questioned for environmental resistance.

However, in the new or future applications mentioned above, Hall elements are expected to be used outdoors and under severe environmental conditions such as high and low temperatures, and stable operation over a wide temperature range, long service life, and smaller temperature dependence will be required, which were not required before. For example, non-contact sensors in automotive applications are required to operate reliably in the range of -40~150°C. This temperature range is a temperature range of 190°C including room temperature. This expansion of the operating environment requires more stringent environmental resistance performance from Hall elements.