
ST PowerStudio dynamic electro-thermal simulation software for power devices

Introduction

ST PowerStudio is a dynamic electrothermal simulation software dedicated to ST power devices.

The software provides a comprehensive power and thermal analysis which allows the user to predict the device performance, shorten the solution design and save time and resources. Furthermore, the tool helps to select the proper device that fits the application mission profile.

Based on a very precise built-in electrical and thermal model and on an iterative calculation, taking into account self-heating effects, ST PowerStudio provides a highly accurate estimation of the power loss as well as the junction and case temperatures.

The software can simulate the mission profile with static load (single set of input conditions) or dynamic load, by changing the input conditions over time and performing a very long simulation profile.

The software allows the simulation of several thermal setup input conditions, such as:

- Devices without heatsink, by estimating the case and junction temperatures
- Fixed case temperature (with heatsink), by estimating the junction temperature and the heatsink R_{th}
- Fixed heatsink thermal resistance, by estimating the case and junction temperatures
- Fixed heatsink thermal impedance, by estimating the case and junction temperatures and considering the thermal inertia of the system

Simulation results are displayed in tables and dedicated scope views, in function of the time, the current load and the switching frequency. An output report is generated, which summarizes all information and results to allow easy archiving.

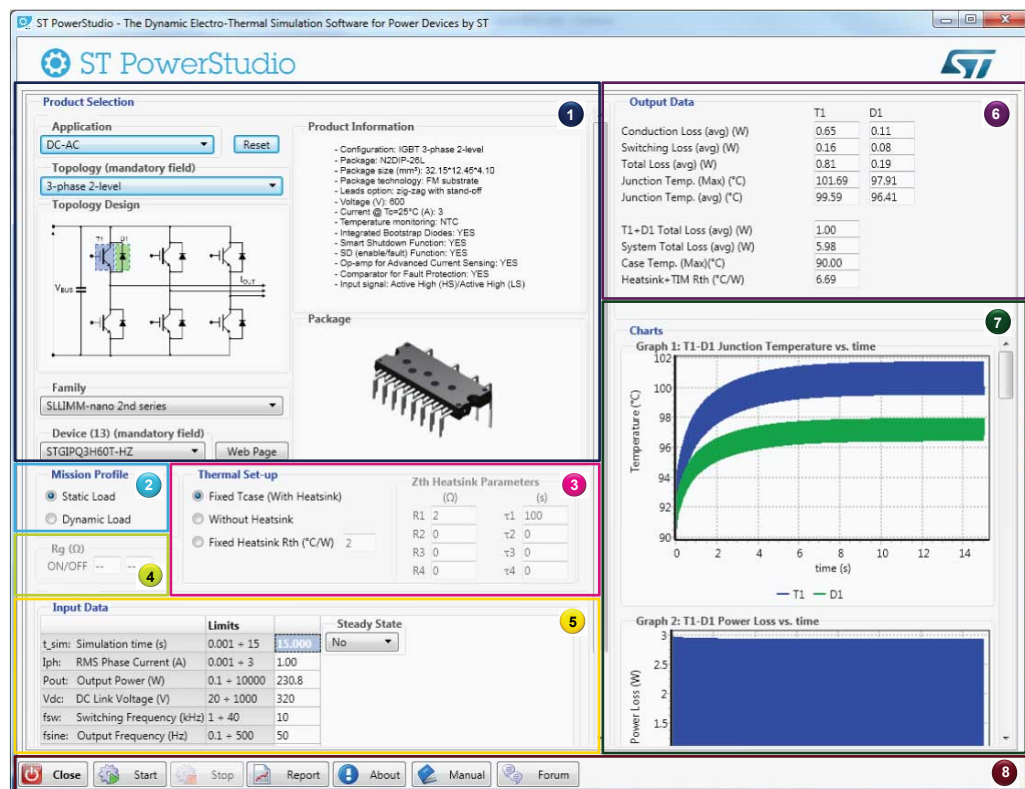
ST PowerStudio currently enables the 3-phase 2-level topology with a sinusoidal PWM technique and supports a large selection of power devices (SLLIMM™-nano, SLLIMM-nano 2nd series, SLLIMM, SLLIMM 2nd series and ACEPAK™) and facilitates the connectivity with st.com for dedicated documentations and resources. An on-line forum provides additional support to ST PowerStudio users. Access to the forum is available at <https://community.st.com/community/st-powerstudio>.

1 Overview

The user interface of the ST PowerStudio includes eight sections, as listed below and shown in [Figure 1. User interface](#).

1. Product selection: this section allows to select the device to be simulated and specify the application and the topology. It includes a list of the main characteristics of the device and the package configuration.
2. Mission profile: this section allows to select static or dynamic load, in order to match any real working conditions of the application.
3. Thermal setup: this section enables the thermal conditions of the simulation. The simulation can be carried out with or without heatsink.
4. Gate driving: this section allows to set the gate resistance values for the devices that have a driving network not internally fixed.
5. Input data: this table allows to set up the electrical and thermal input parameters of the application and the simulation time.
6. Output data: these fields show the simulation results: power loss of the device, case and junction temperatures and thermal resistance of the heatsink.
7. Charts: this section shows two main chart groups: the first one shows the real time junction and case temperature of the IGBT/MOSFET and freewheeling diode; the second one shows the average power loss as a function of phase current and switching frequency (for more details, refer to [Section 2 User interface description](#)).
8. Command buttons: this area includes the main command buttons used to handle the simulation and get support.

Figure 1. User interface



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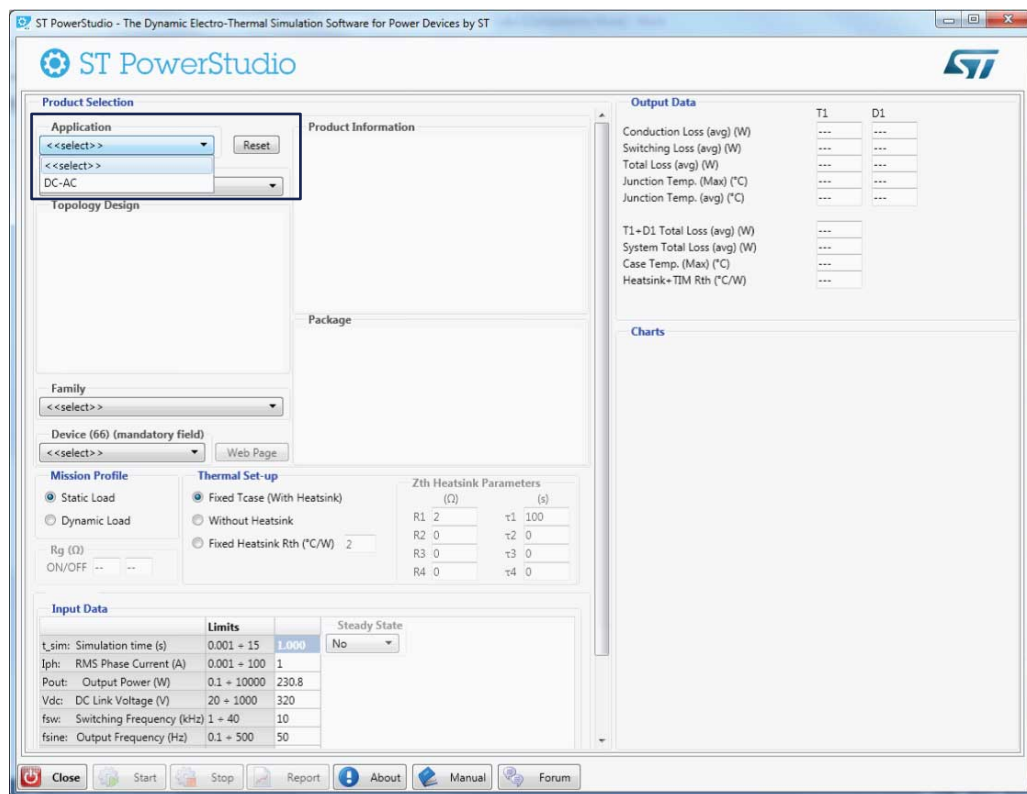
2 User interface description

2.1 Product selection

The product selection section allows to choose the device based on the application and the topology. It includes four menus, linked to each other with a filter:

- The application drop-down menu is used to select the application to be simulated (Figure 2. Application selection).

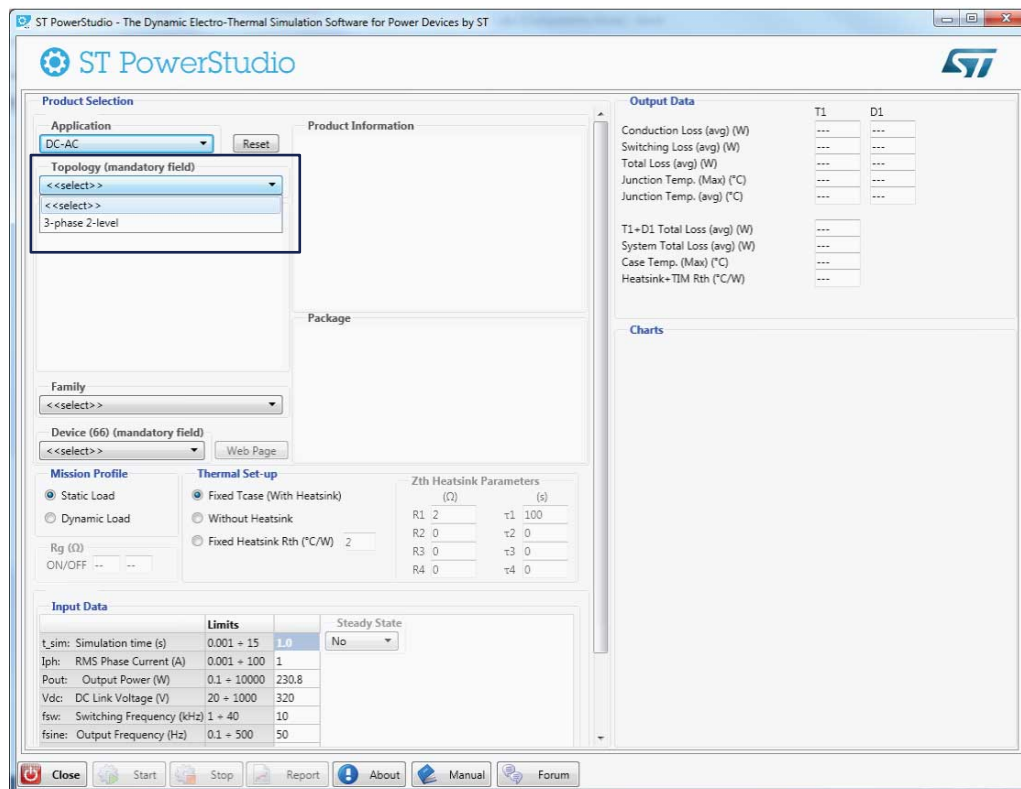
Figure 2. Application selection



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- The topology drop-down menu lists the topologies to be chosen for the simulation (Figure 3. Topology selection). Once the topology has been selected, the circuit configuration appears in the topology design field (Figure 4. Family selection).

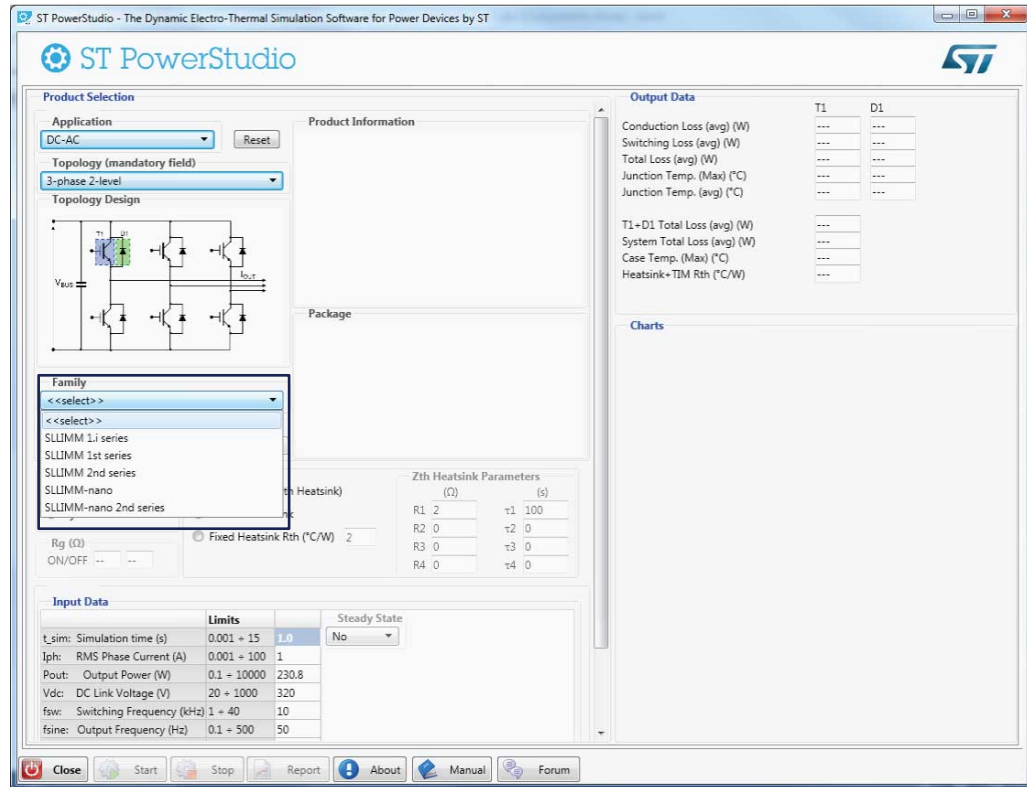
Figure 3. Topology selection



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- The family drop-down menu lists the ST product families (Figure 4. Family selection).

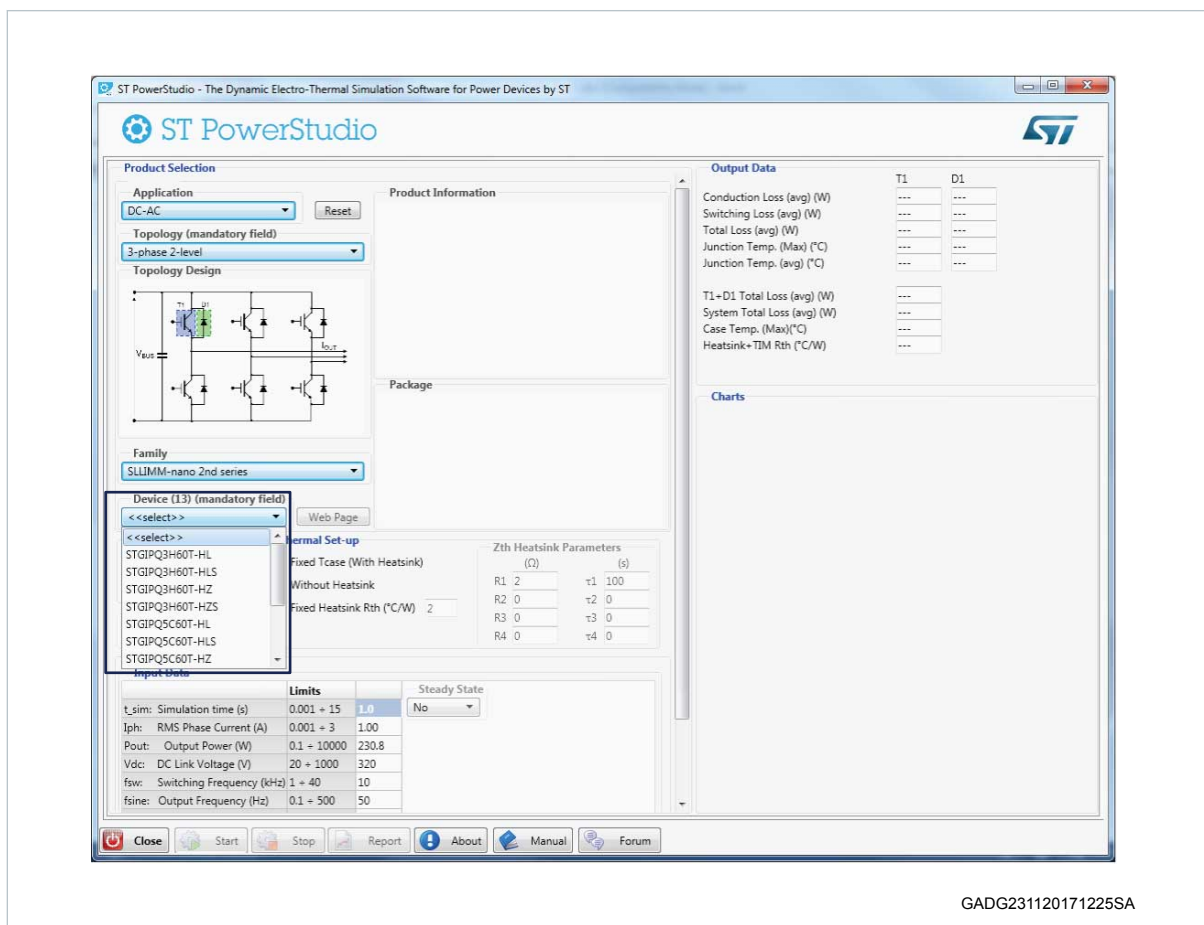
Figure 4. Family selection



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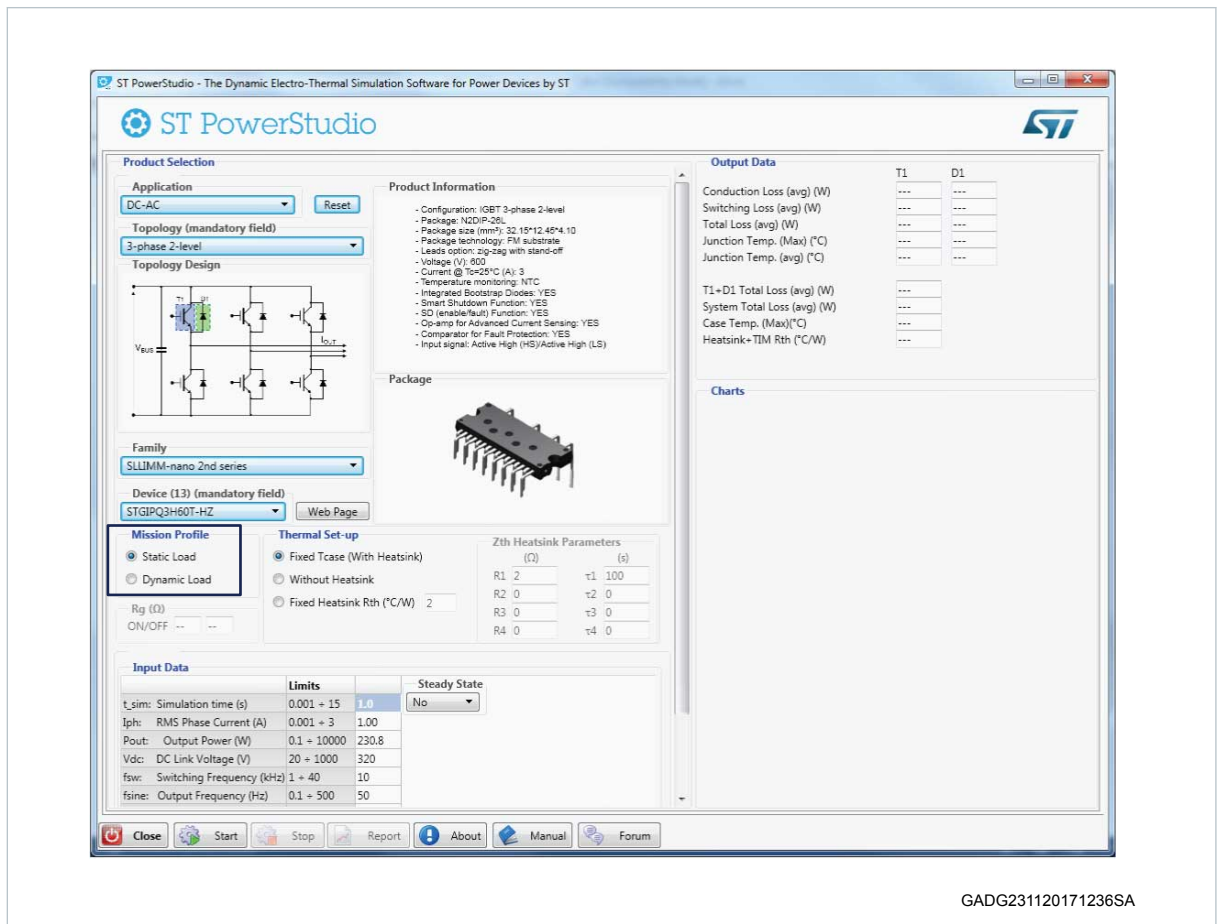
- The device menu (Figure 5. Device selection) is the final step of the device selection as it allows to select the part number among the products filtered from the previous menus. Once the device has been selected, an information list containing the main product data appears in the Product Information field. This information includes also the package configuration, and it is useful for the first selection of the device which better fits the application requirements. To access the device web page, click on the web page button.

Figure 5. Device selection



2.2 Mission profile

ST PowerStudio can simulate both static and dynamic load configurations, to match any real mission profile of the application. The user can select the simulation type in the mission profile field (Figure 6. Mission profile selection). Static load provides a single set of input conditions and shows the instantaneous behavior for the power loss and junction temperature estimation. The dynamic load enables up to ten sets of input conditions, changing independently all input parameters over the time. This setup allows a long application mission profile simulation in a very short computation time, without effecting the accuracy.

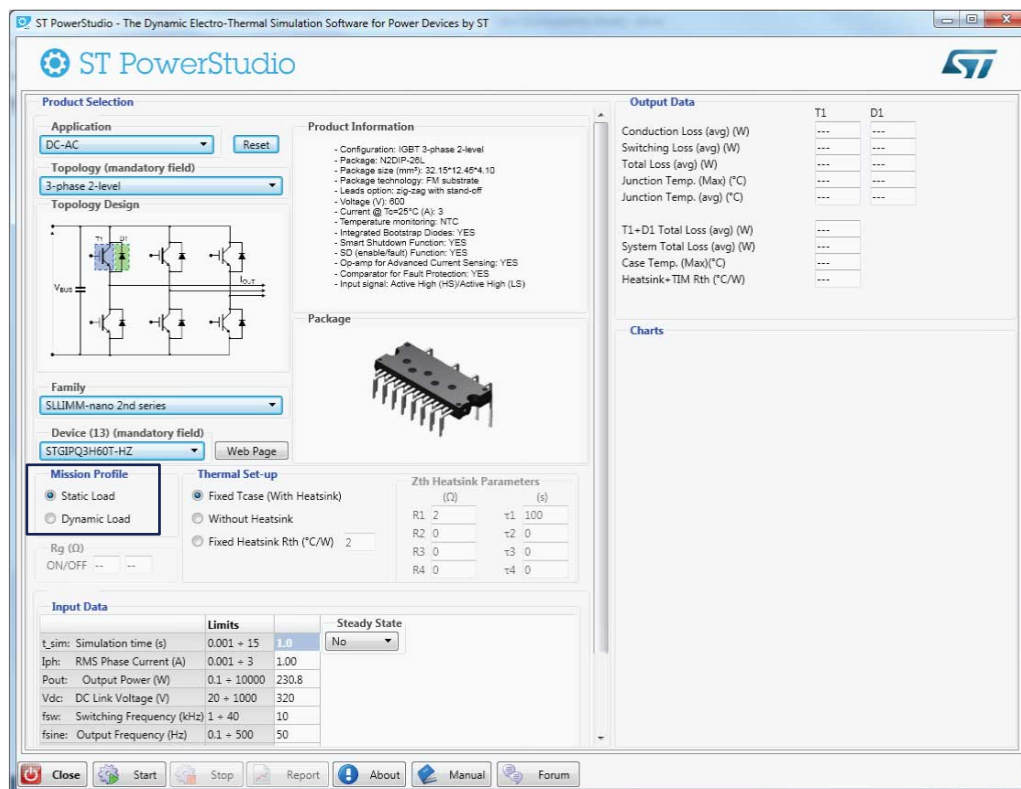
Figure 6. Mission profile selection


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2.3 Thermal setup

In the thermal setup section the user can select four different options ([Figure 7. Thermal setup selection](#)).

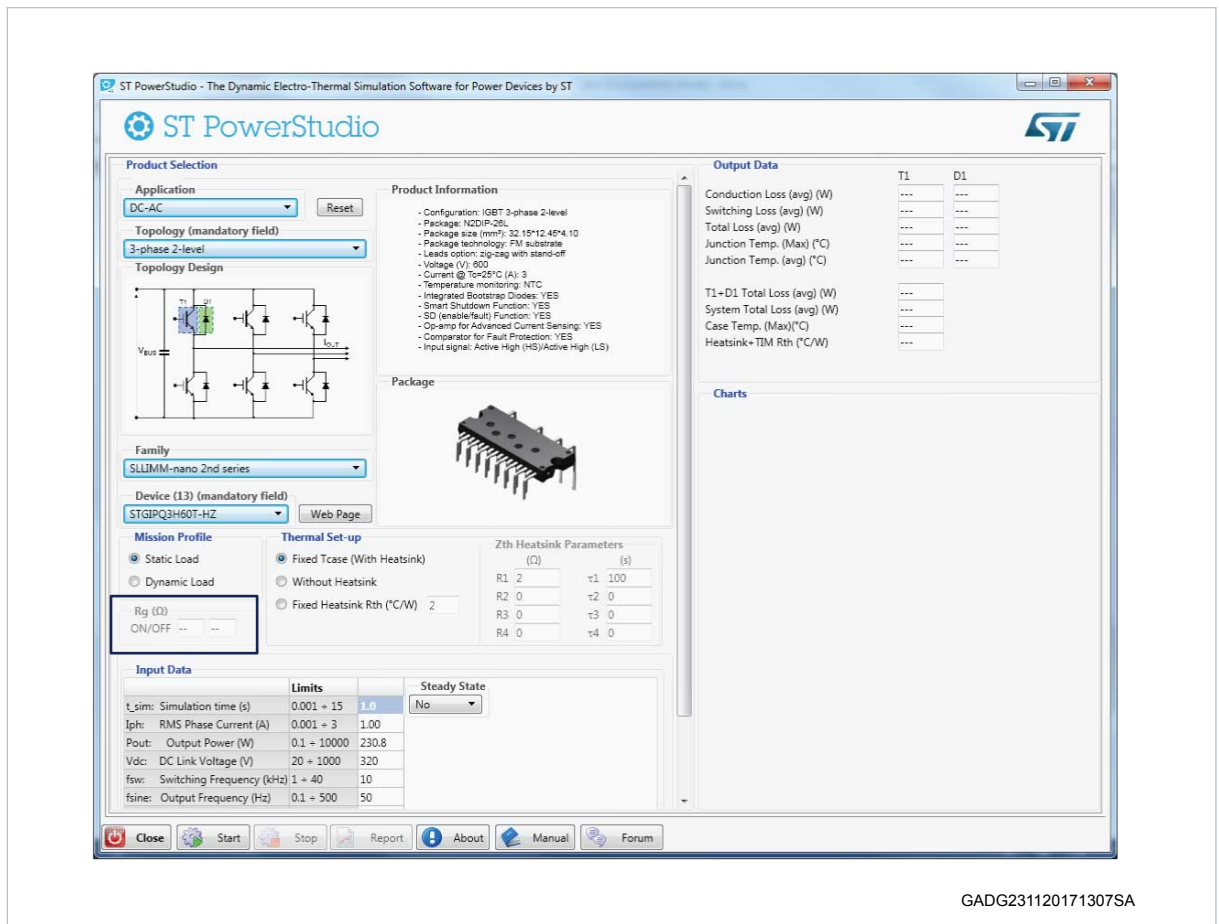
- Fixed T_{case} (with heatsink) / fixed $T_{heatsink}$: the device is supposed to be used with a heatsink and the case temperature or heatsink temperature is fixed by the user. Using the dynamic mission profile, the T_{case} can be fixed, step by step, at different values (see input data section).
- Without heatsink: the device can be used without heatsink and, therefore, case temperature is estimated by the simulation. This option is allowed only for SLLIMM-nano product families.
- Fixed heatsink R_{th} : the heatsink thermal resistance is defined by the user. According to this heatsink R_{th} value and the estimated power loss, ST PowerStudio will calculate the case temperature as well.
- Z_{th} heatsink: the heatsink thermal impedance is defined by the user. The thermal behavior of the heatsink is simulated by a Foster model, set by up to four R and t parameters inserted by the user. According to this heatsink Z_{th} model and the estimated power loss, ST PowerStudio will calculate the time-dependent case temperature as well.

Figure 7. Thermal setup selection


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2.4 Gate driving

The gate driving section (see figure below) allows to set the gate resistors values, split for ON and OFF. This field is available only for the devices designed to be driven by an external network (SLLIMM devices do not require any external gate resistor thus the fields will be displayed as a dash).

Figure 8. Gate driving section


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2.5 Input data

The input data section (Figure 9. Input data section for static load simulation) includes the input simulation parameters, as listed below and shown in Figure 10. 3-phase sinusoidal PWM parameters. The table also shows the validity data range for each parameter.

- Simulation time (t_{sim}): this is the time window for the event under simulation. For static load simulations, t_{sim} can be set in steady state; the t_{sim} field will be automatically filled with the time sufficient to reach the steady state for the device junction temperature, starting from the T_{case} .
- RMS phase current (I_{ph}): this is the RMS value of phase current (3-phase 2-level topology).
- Output power (P_{out}): this is the output power of the 3-phase 2-level topology. This value can be entered by the user or can be automatically calculated using the other input parameters, according to equation 1 below:

$$P_{out} = \frac{3\sqrt{2}}{4} I_{ph} \cdot MI \cdot PF \cdot V_{dc} \quad (1)$$

- DC link voltage (V_{dc}): this is the DC bus voltage.
- Switching frequency (f_{sw}): this is the switching frequency of the device.
- Output frequency (f_{sine}): this is the electrical frequency on the load, given by equation 2 below:

$$f_{Sine} = \frac{rpm \cdot (2p)}{60} \quad (2)$$

where rpm is the number of revolutions per minute of the rotor and 2p is the number of pole pairs.

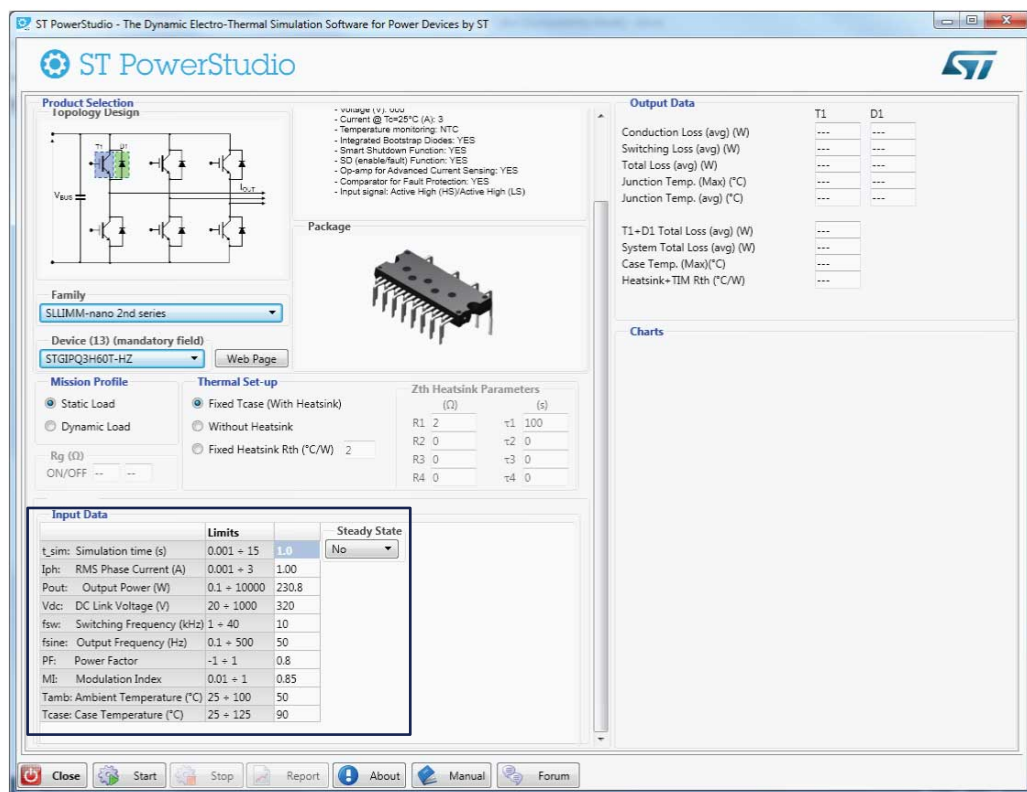
- Power factor (PF): this is the cosine of the phase angle between phase voltage V_A and phase current I_{ph} (or the $\cos \phi$).

- Modulation index (MI): this is the modulation index of the 3-phase sinusoidal PWM, given by equation 3 below:

$$MI = \frac{V_{m, \text{Sine}}}{V_{m, \text{tri}}} \quad (3)$$

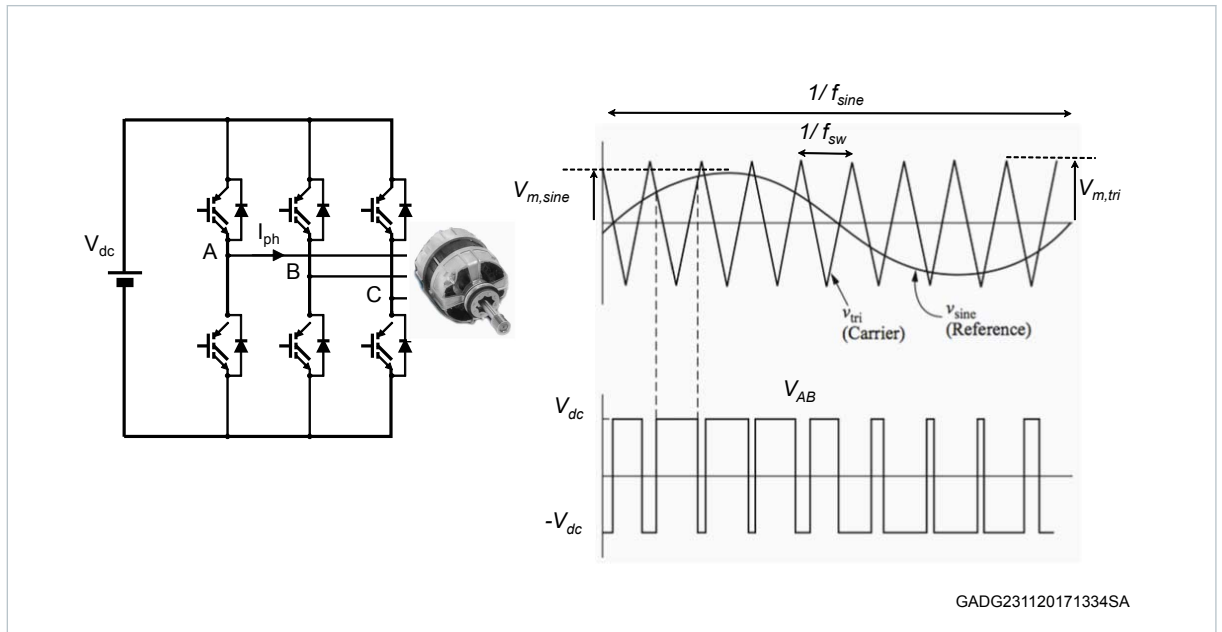
- Ambient temperature (T_{amb}): this is the local ambient temperature measured close to the application.
- Case temperature (T_{case}) / heatsink (T_{hs}): it is the temperature on the case or on the heatsink and it can be fixed by the user, if the thermal set-up is in fixed T_{case} (with heatsink) / fixed T_{heatsink} configuration, or it represents the hottest case point as result of the simulation, in any other thermal set-up configuration.

Figure 9. Input data section for static load simulation



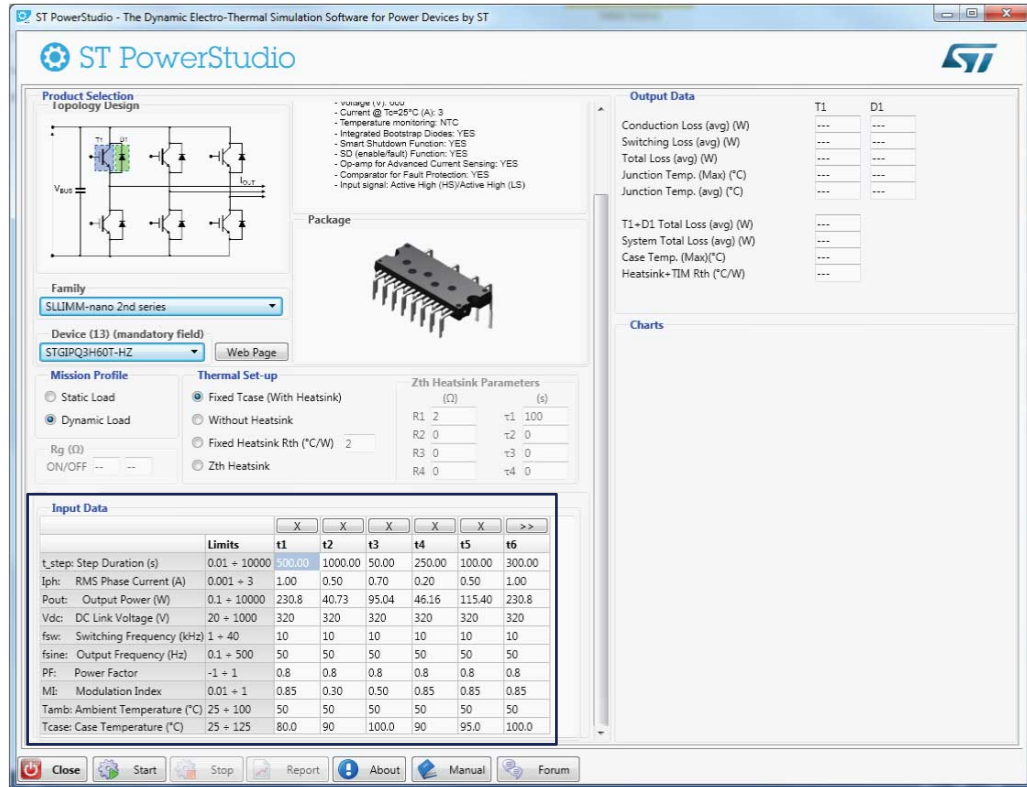
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Figure 10. 3-phase sinusoidal PWM parameters



If the mission profile menu is set on dynamic load, the input data section allows to enter the following parameters for each mission profile step (Figure 9. Input data section for static load simulation).

Figure 11. Input data section for dynamic load simulation



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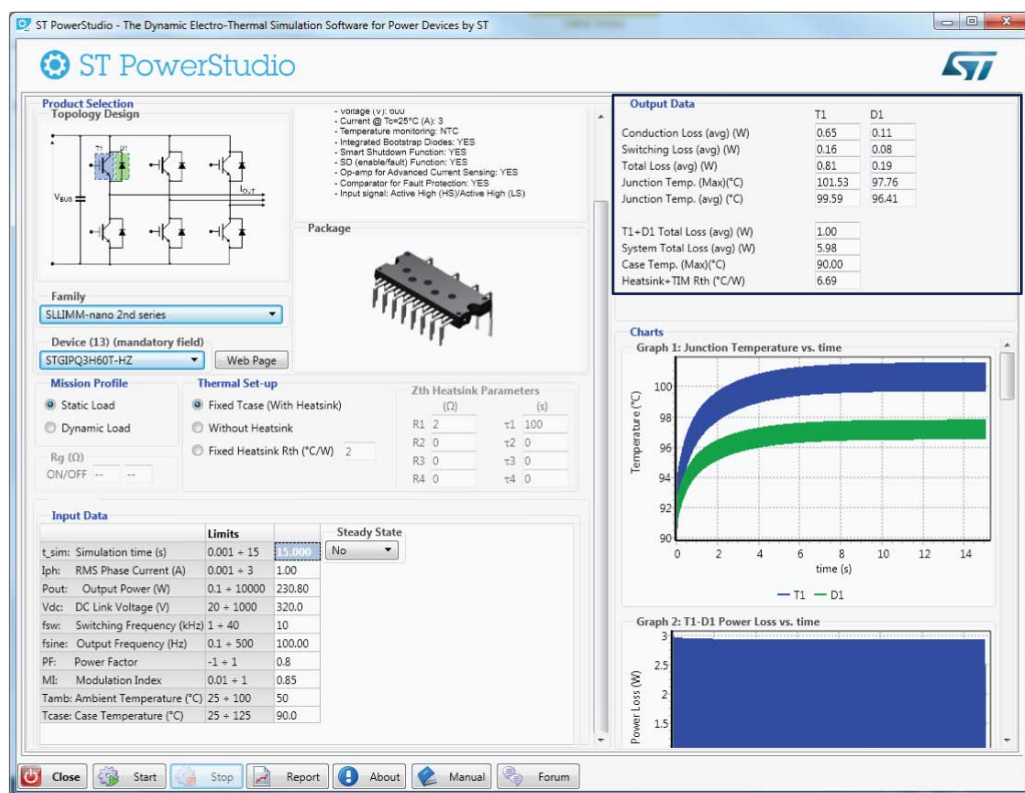
2.6 Output data

The output data section (see [Figure 12. Output data section for static load simulation](#)) includes a set of simulation results, as listed below, according to the circuit configuration selected in the topology design field:

- Conduction loss (T1): this is the IGBT/MOSFET conduction power loss (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Conduction loss (D1): this is the freewheeling diode conduction power loss (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Switching loss (T1): this is the IGBT/MOSFET switching power loss (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Switching loss (D1): this is the freewheeling diode reverse recovery power loss (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Total loss (T1): this is the IGBT/MOSFET total power loss, conduction plus switching (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Total loss (D1): this is the freewheeling diode total power loss, conduction plus reverse recovery (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Junction temp. (T1, Max): this is the IGBT/MOSFET maximum junction temperature during the simulation time under analysis.
- Junction temp. (D1, Max): this is the freewheeling diode maximum junction temperature during the simulation time under analysis.
- Junction temp. (T1, avg): this is the IGBT/MOSFET junction temperature (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Junction temp. (D1, avg): this is the freewheeling diode junction temperature (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).

- T1+D1 total loss: this is the total switch power loss IGBT/MOSFET plus freewheeling diode (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- System total loss: this is the total inverter power loss 6x IGBT/MOSFET plus 6x freewheeling diode (average on the simulation time, t_{sim}).
- Case temp. (max) / heatsink temp. (max): it is the maximum case or heatsink temperature during the simulation time under analysis.
- Heatsink+TIM R_{th} / heatsink R_{th} : it is the thermal resistance of the heatsink system (including the thermal interface material, when mentioned) required to match the input conditions.

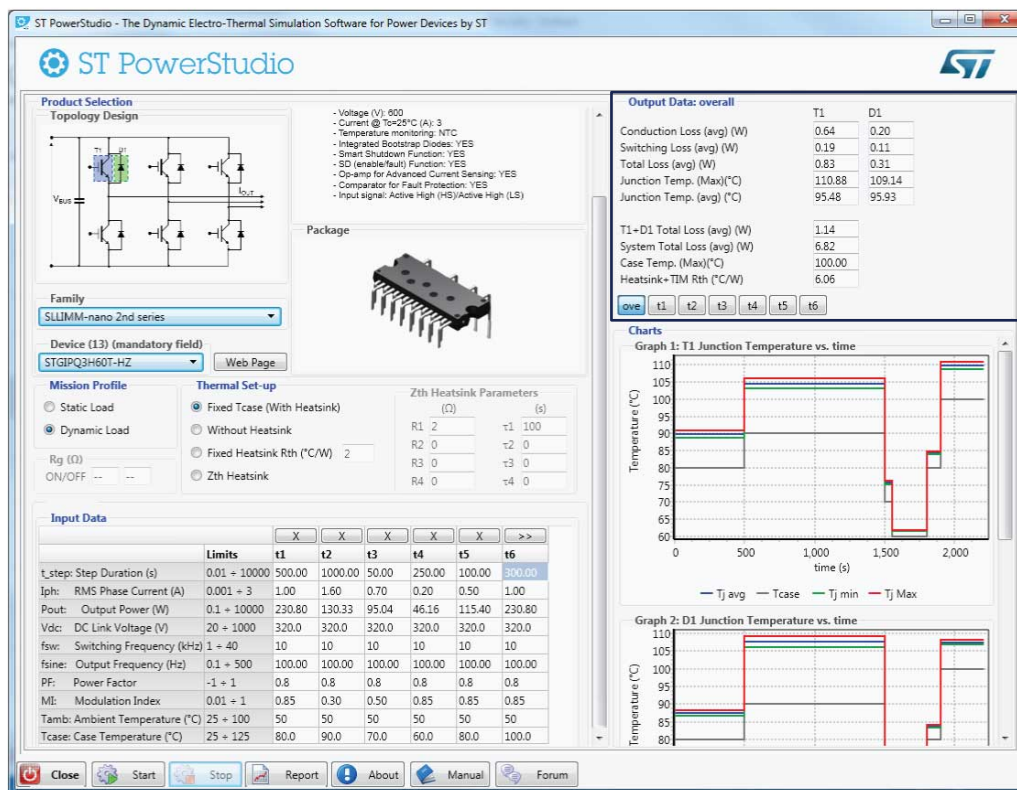
Figure 12. Output data section for static load simulation



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For dynamic load simulations, the output data section (see [Figure 13. Output data section for dynamic load simulation](#)) consists of $n+1$ tabs, where n is the number of mission profile steps. The output results, related to each step, can be shown clicking the t_1, \dots, t_n buttons, whereas the ove tab shows the overall output results, calculated considering all the steps.

Figure 13. Output data section for dynamic load simulation



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2.7 Charts

The output charts section includes a set of charts which show the real-time behavior for temperatures and power loss, and some additional charts describing power loss as a function of phase current or switching frequency. The output charts for static load simulations (see [Figure 14. Output charts for static load simulations](#)) are described below:

- *Graph 1: T1-D1 junction temperature vs time*

The real time junction temperatures for both IGBT/MOSFET and freewheeling diode are shown.

- *Graph 2: T1-D1 power loss vs time*

The real time total power loss for both IGBT/MOSFET and freewheeling diode is shown.

- *Graph 3: T1 power loss vs current RMS*

The average power loss for the IGBT/MOSFET as a function of RMS current is shown. The power loss is split into two components: conduction and switching, and the total power loss is also displayed. The curves are calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 4: T1 power loss vs switching frequency*

The average power loss for the IGBT/MOSFET as a function of switching frequency is shown. The power loss is split into two components: conduction and switching, and the total power loss is also displayed. The curves are calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the switching frequency in the input data.

- *Graph 5: D1 power loss vs current RMS*

The average power loss for the freewheeling diode as a function of RMS current is shown. The power loss is split into two components: conduction and switching, and the total power loss is also displayed. The curves are

calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 6: D1 power loss vs switching frequency*

The average power loss for the freewheeling diode as a function of switching frequency is shown. The power loss is split into two components: conduction and switching, and the total power loss is also displayed. The curves are calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the switching frequency in the input data.

- *Graph 7: inverter power loss vs current RMS*

The average total power loss for the inverter as a function of RMS current is shown. The curve is calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 8: inverter power loss vs switching frequency*

The average total power loss for the inverter as a function of switching frequency is shown. The curve is calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the switching frequency in the input data.

- *Graph 9: power loss distribution vs current RMS*

The percentage of conduction and switching of both the IGBT/MOSFET and the freewheeling diode as a function of RMS current is shown. The curves are calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 10: power loss distribution vs switching frequency*

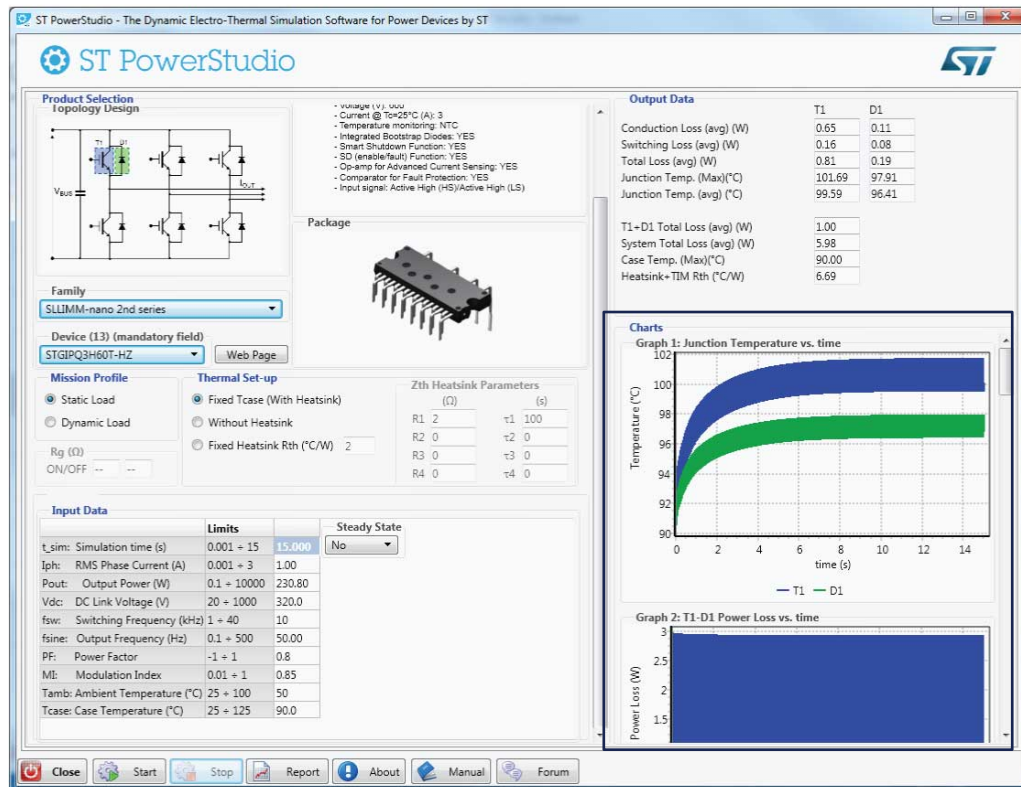
The percentage of conduction and switching for both IGBT/MOSFET and freewheeling diode as a function of switching frequency is shown. The curves are calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 11: maximum allowable case temperature vs current RMS*

This graph shows the temperature which must not be exceeded on the case temperature of the device in order to keep the junction temperature within the absolute maximum ratings as a function of the RMS current. The curve is calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the RMS phase current in the input data.

- *Graph 12: maximum allowable case temperature vs switching frequency*

This graph shows the temperature which must not be exceeded on the case temperature of the device in order to keep the junction temperature within the absolute maximum ratings as a function of switching frequency. The curve is calculated using the input data set by the user. The grey vertical line shows the switching current in the input data.

Figure 14. Output charts for static load simulations


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The output charts for dynamic load simulations (see [Figure 15. Output charts for dynamic load simulations](#)) are described below:

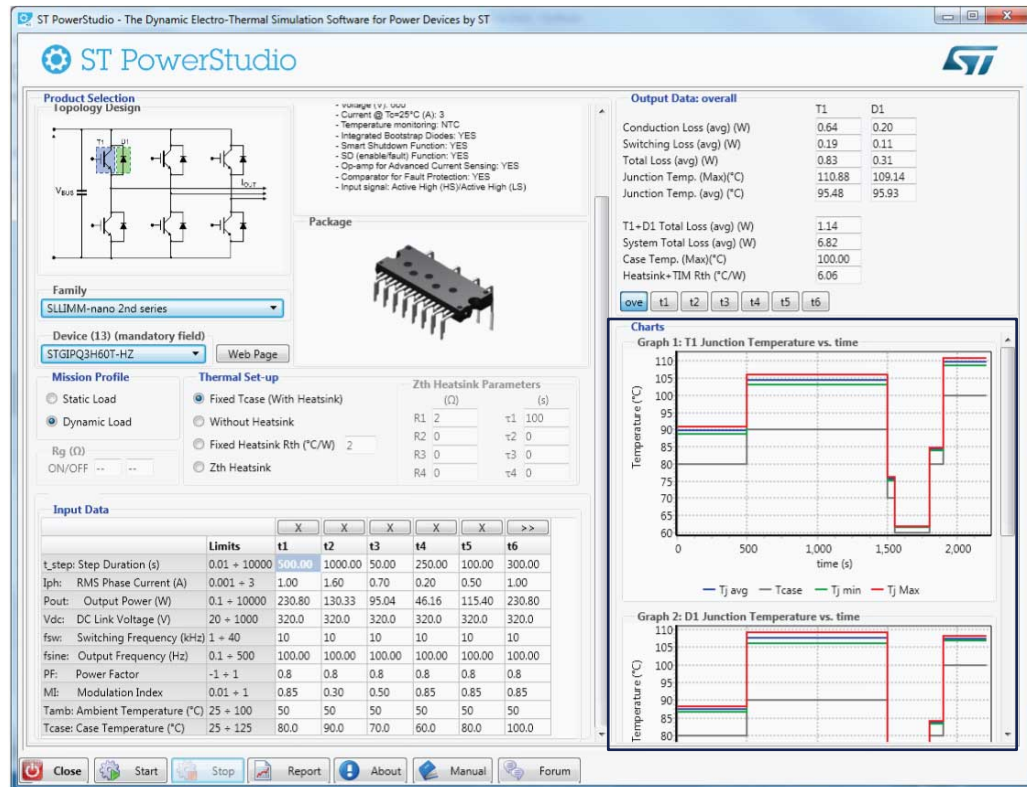
- **Graph 1: junction temperature vs time**

The case and junction temperatures for the IGBT/MOSFET are shown. The junction temperature is split into three curves: average, minimum and maximum T_j . The device case temperature (grey line) is displayed if the thermal setup is set in fixed T_{case} (with heatsink), while this temperature is calculated for simulations without heatsink or when the heatsink is defined by the user (by R_{th} or Z_{th} insertion).

- **Graph 2: T1-D1 power loss (avg) vs time**

The average power loss for both the IGBT/MOSFET and the freewheeling diode is shown.

Figure 15. Output charts for dynamic load simulations



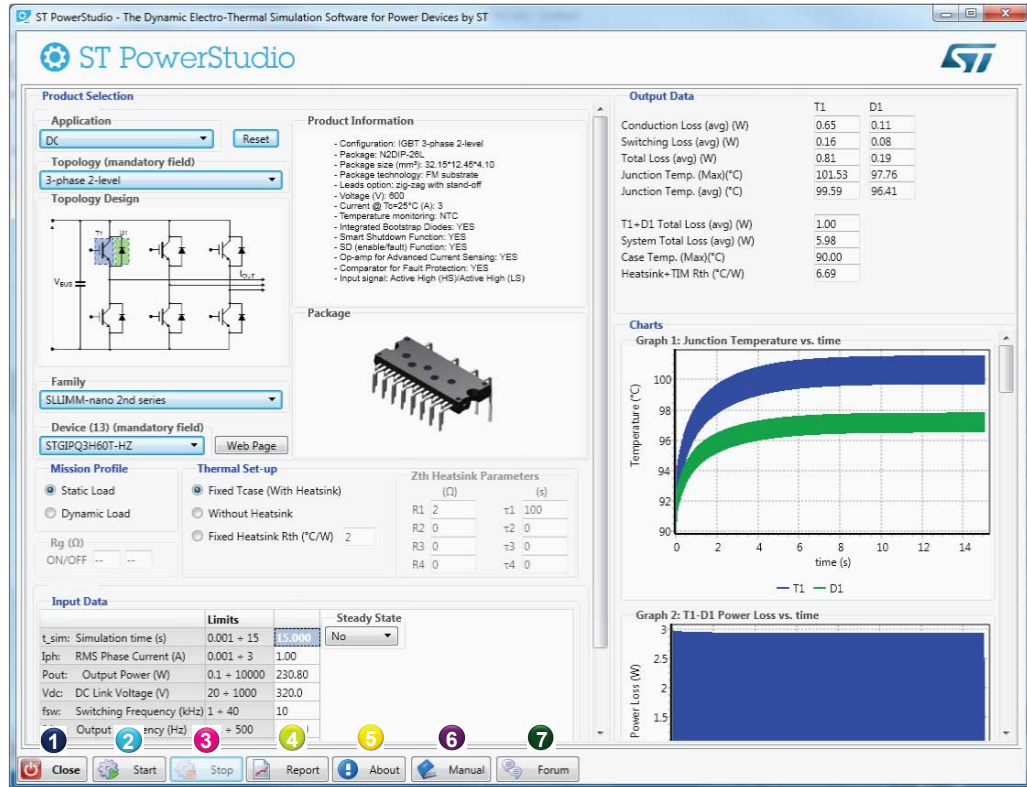
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2.8 Command buttons

Figure 16. Command buttons shows the main ST PowerStudio command buttons, which are briefly described below:

1. Close: this allows to close the ST PowerStudio.
2. Start: once the user clicks the start button, the simulation begins.
3. Stop: clicking the stop button, the simulation can be ended at any time. Once the simulation stops, the computation is reset.
4. Report: this is enabled at the end of the simulation in order to open the report section.
5. About: this opens the About windows, which displays a brief description of the ST PowerStudio and provides links to its web page, the license agreement and the ST web page.
6. Manual: this opens the user manual.
7. Forum: this opens the forum page, available at <https://community.st.com/community/st-powerstudio>.

Figure 16. Command buttons



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3 Simulation report

ST PowerStudio allows to summarize the simulation results within a simulation report, clicking the *Report* button (see Figure 1. User interface, in particular section 8 of the same picture), available at the end of the simulation.

The simulation report includes seven sections, as listed below and shown in Figure 17. Simulation report, page 1 and Figure 18. Simulation report, page 2:

1. Product description: this section shows the product part number with its main electrical specifications and the package picture. The application and topology under simulation are also shown. The product description is completed by the QR code of the ST product page link.
2. Mission profile: the simulation type is specified (static or dynamic load).
3. Gate driving: the gate resistors values of the gate driving network, split for ON and OFF, are shown in this section. This information is reported only if the gate driving network of the device has been defined by the user.
4. Thermal setup: shows the thermal setup chosen for the simulation.
5. Input data: the simulation input data table is displayed in this section.
6. Output data: the simulation results table is displayed in this section. For dynamic load simulations the table includes the data for all the mission profile steps.
7. Charts: this section includes all output charts

Figure 17. Simulation report, page 1

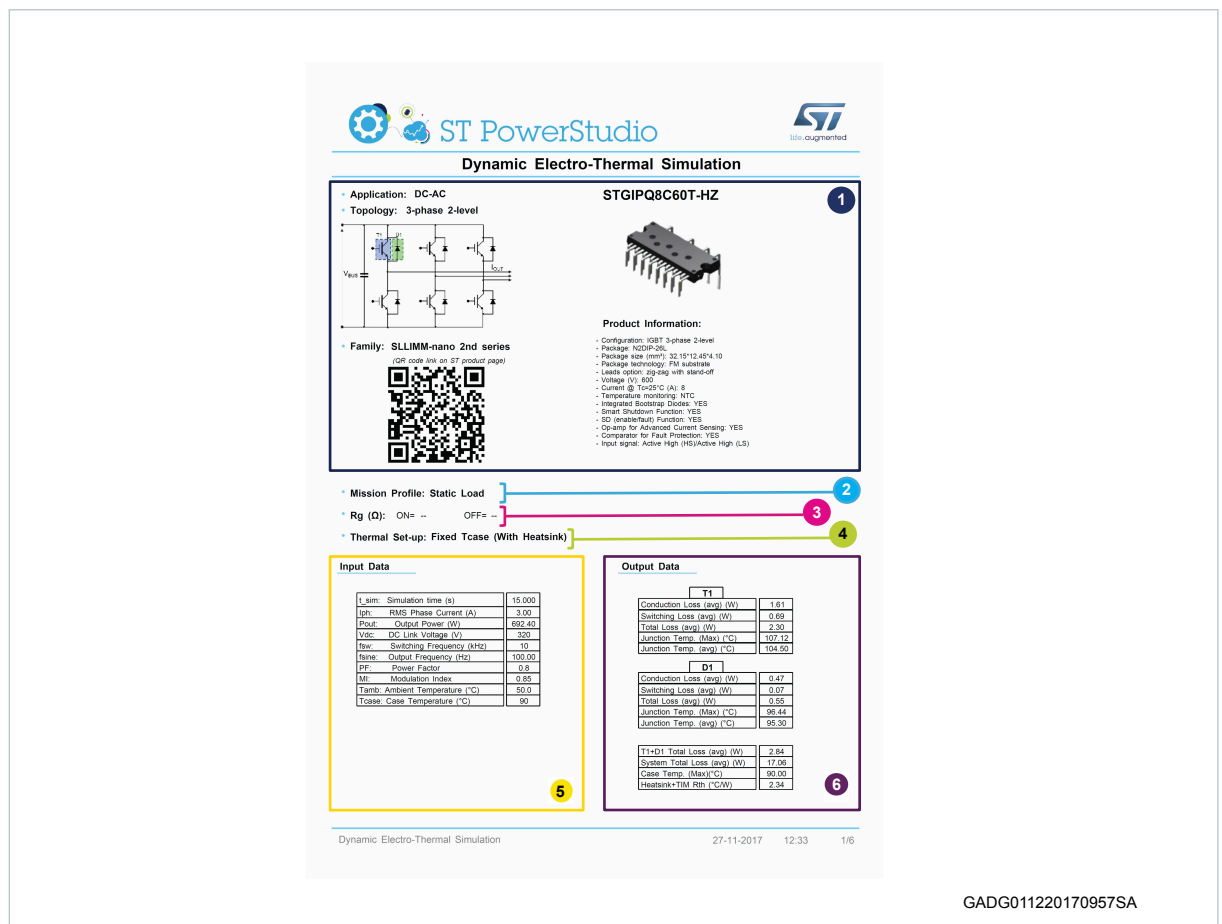


Figure 18. Simulation report, page 2

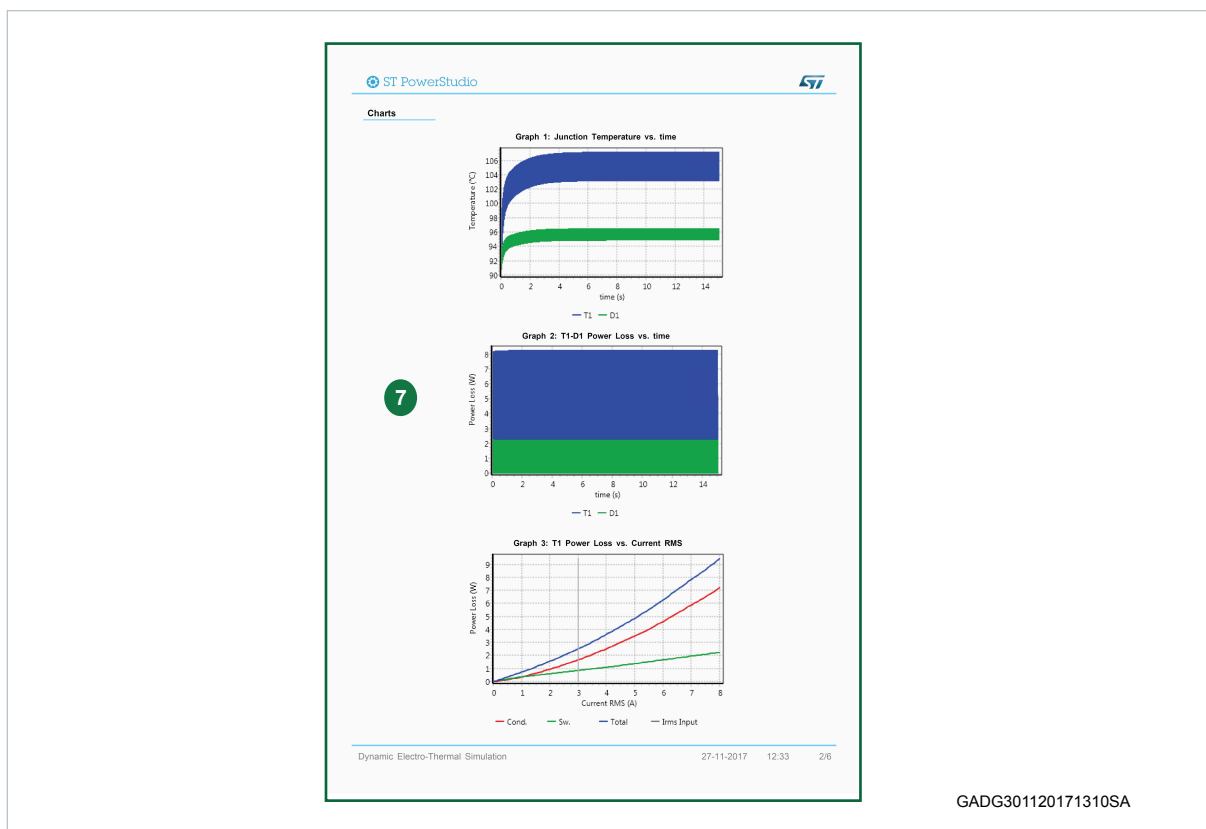
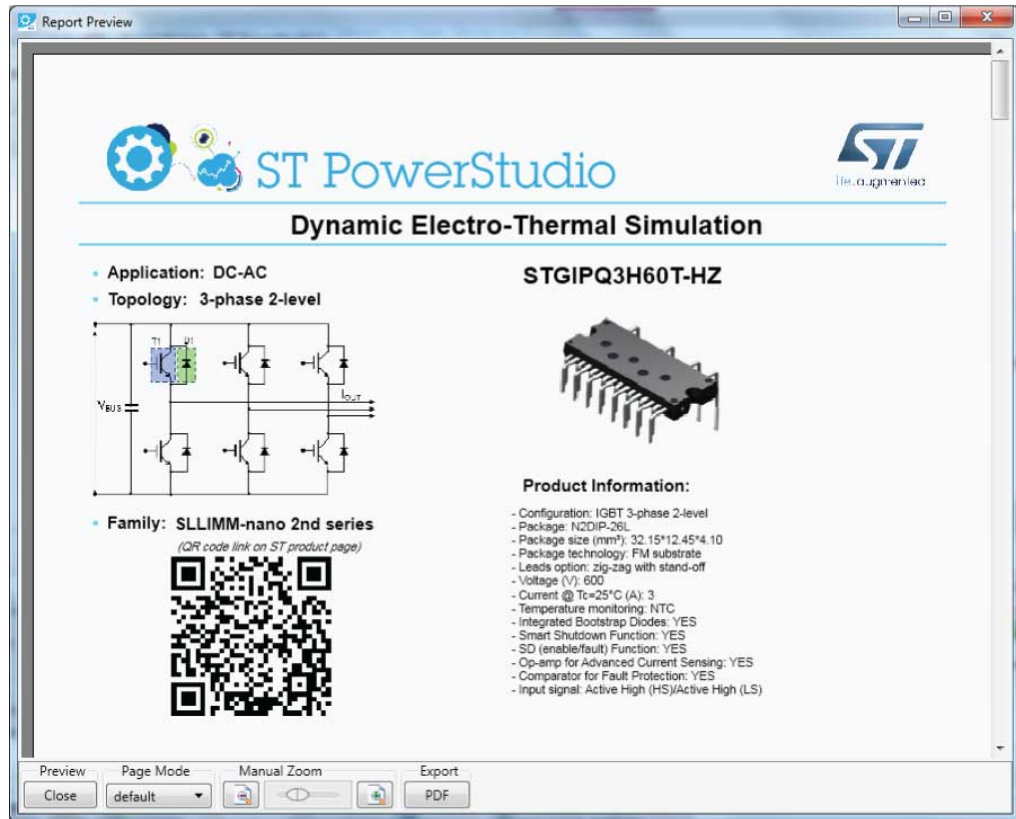


Figure 19. Report window



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4 Electrical and thermal modelling

Power semiconductors generate power loss during their functioning, which is dissipated in form of heat increasing the junction temperature. Power semiconductors are also thermally limited, thus a good thermal design is a key point for a reliable system. It is therefore essential that the thermal design determines in an accurate way the maximum junction temperature from the device power dissipation.

ST PowerStudio allows to estimate the power loss and to determine accurately the junction temperature of power semiconductors, thanks to a very precise built-in modeling of each device's electrical and thermal parameters, and thanks to a sophisticated and iterative calculation which considers the self-heating effects.

4.1 Electrical and thermal models

The major sources of power loss are given by the conduction loss and the switching loss. The conduction loss (P_{cond}) is the on-state loss during the conduction phase, and it depends on the on-state voltage drop on the transistor ($V_{\text{CE(sat)}}$ for IGBT and $V_{\text{DS(on)}}$ for MOSFET) or the forward drop V_f across the diode.

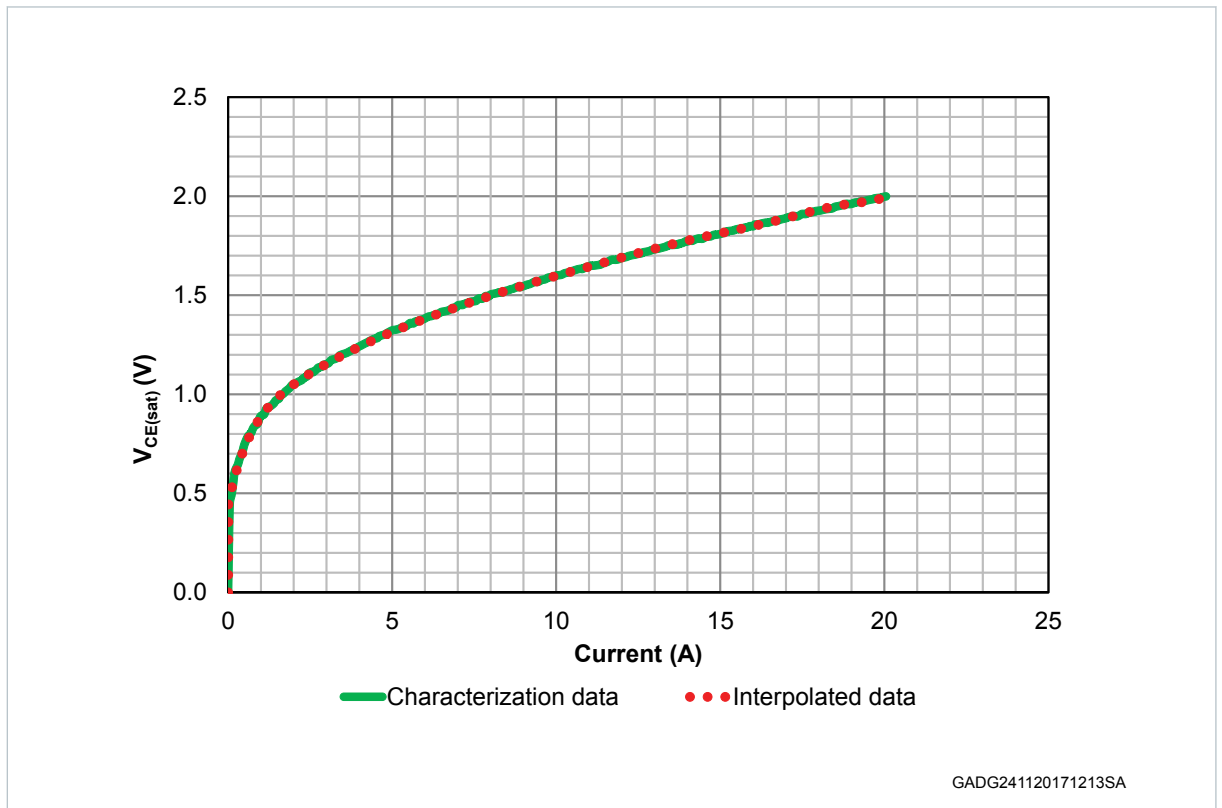
The switching loss (P_{sw}) is the dynamic loss encountered during commutation. In the transistor, switching losses mainly occur during turn-on and turn-off transients, while in the diode these losses are mainly due to reverse recovery.

Voltage drop for transistors, as well as forward drop for diodes, can be represented as a function of current and junction temperature, while switching energy as a function of current, voltage, junction temperature and driving network (gate resistors).

All these electrical parameters ($V_{\text{CE(sat)}}$, $V_{\text{DS(on)}}$, V_f , E_{on} , E_{off} , E_{rr}) result from characterization data on a typical inductive load (for dynamic measurements) and are then approximated with empirical models. To achieve the highest accuracy in the power loss estimation, ST PowerStudio is based on the n th degree Lagrange interpolating polynomial, where n is the most accurate for the finest fitting in each of the aforementioned parameters, as follows:

$$p_n(x) = a_0x^n + a_1x^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1}x + a_n \quad i = 0, 1, \dots, n \quad (4)$$

Figure 20. Example of $V_{\text{CE(sat)}}$ fitting curve shows an example of interpolated data (dotted line) compared with the characterization data (solid line).

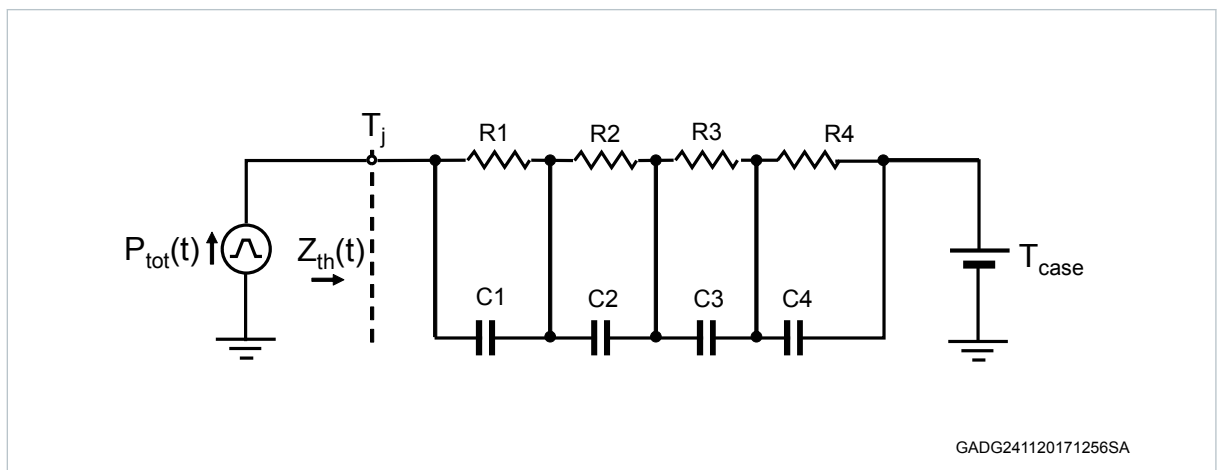
Figure 20. Example of $V_{CE(sat)}$ fitting curve


The junction temperature is a key element that impacts each one of these parameters and is well considered in this simulation tool as linear interpolation between two known points.

In addition to the average junction temperature, the temperature ripple of the semiconductor must be calculated since the temperature fluctuations stress the power semiconductor.

The temperature model of a semiconductor can be represented by an electrical equivalent RC network using a thermo-electrical analogy. The number of RC sections increases the model details. Finally, the transient thermal impedance $Z_{th}(t)$ is represented with a fourth order model, based on the Foster network, as shown in Figure 21. Foster RC equivalent circuit.

Figure 21. Foster RC equivalent circuit



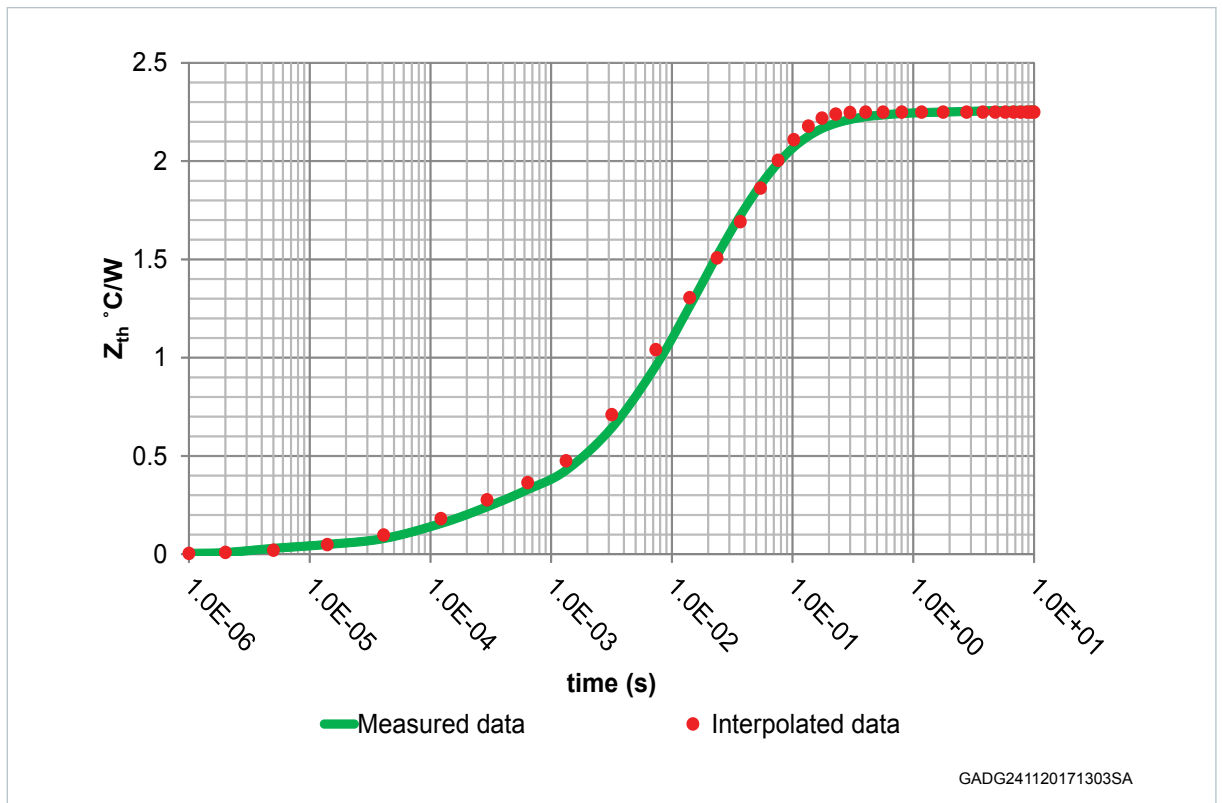
The input to the thermal model is the power loss in the semiconductor. Furthermore, the $Z_{th(j-c)}$ (or $Z_{th(j-h)}$ for ACEPACK products) can be analytically represented by using the equation below:

$$Z_{th(j-c)}(t) = \sum_{i=1}^n R_i \left(1 - e^{-t/\tau_i}\right) \quad (5)$$

where R is the resistor value shown in the Foster network and τ is the time constant value ($R \cdot C$).

Figure 22. Transient thermal impedance fitting curve shows the fitting curve using the analytic equation (dotted line) and the measured data (solid line).

Figure 22. Transient thermal impedance fitting curve



5 Power loss and junction temperature calculation

ST PowerStudio is based on a sophisticated calculation flow which benefits of a fine discretization of output current. This results in a more accurate estimation of the power loss and junction temperature as a function of time.

According to the application, the topology and the modulation technique type (3-phase sinusoidal PWM is used in the current version) and considering the electrical and thermal models mentioned above, the time-dependent power loss is calculated as follows for each single discretization step:

Step 1: transistor conduction loss

for Power MOSFET:

$$P_{cond(Tr)}(i, T_j) = i \cdot V_{DS(on)}(i, T_j) \cdot \delta \quad (6)$$

for Power IGBT:

$$P_{cond(Tr)}(i, T_j) = i \cdot V_{CE(sat)}(i, T_j) \cdot \delta \quad (7)$$

Step 2: transistor switching loss

$$P_{sw(Tr)}(i, V, R_g, T_j, V_{DC}) = [E_{on}(i, V, R_{g(on)}, T_j, V_{DC}) + E_{off}(i, V, R_{g(off)}, T_j, V_{DC})] \cdot f_{sw} \quad (8)$$

Step 3: diode conduction loss

$$P_{con(Di)}(i, T_j) = i \cdot V_f(i, T_j) \cdot (1 - \delta) \quad (9)$$

Step 4: diode switching loss

$$P_{sw(Di)}(i, V, R_g, T_j, V_{DC}) = E_{rec}(i, V, R_{g(on)}, T_j, V_{DC}) \cdot f_{sw} \quad (10)$$

ST PowerStudio is based on a self-heating strategy that allows to estimate the power loss in real time, which is dynamically influenced by junction temperature itself.

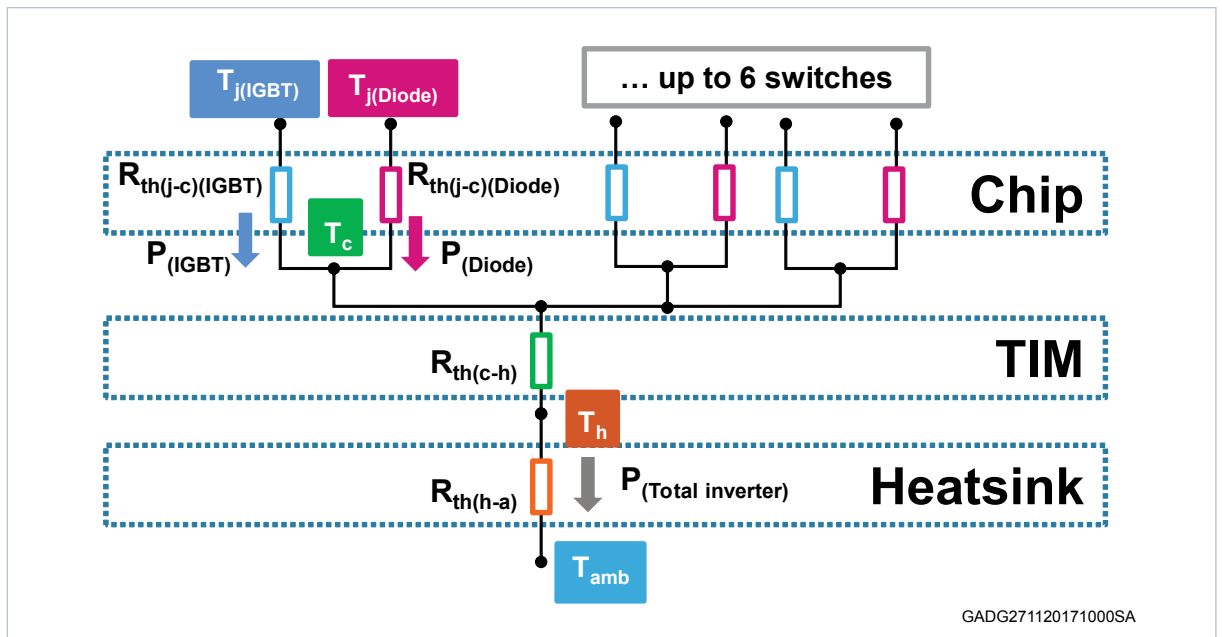
The time-dependent junction temperature is estimated for all power chips using the transient thermal impedance, as shown in the equation below, and is calculated based on the general thermal diagram shown in [Figure 23. General thermal diagram](#).

$$T_j(t) = Z_{th(j-c)}(t) \cdot [P_{cond}(t) + P_{sw}(t)] + T_{case} \quad (11)$$

or

$$T_j(t) = Z_{th(j-h)}(t) \cdot [P_{cond}(t) + P_{sw}(t)] + T_{heatsink} \quad (12)$$

Figure 23. General thermal diagram



The computation method is shown in Figure 24. [Computation flow chart](#), which highlights the self-heating effect on the power loss estimation and, therefore, on the junction temperature. This loop is iterated, step-by-step, till the end of the simulation.

Figure 24. Computation flow chart

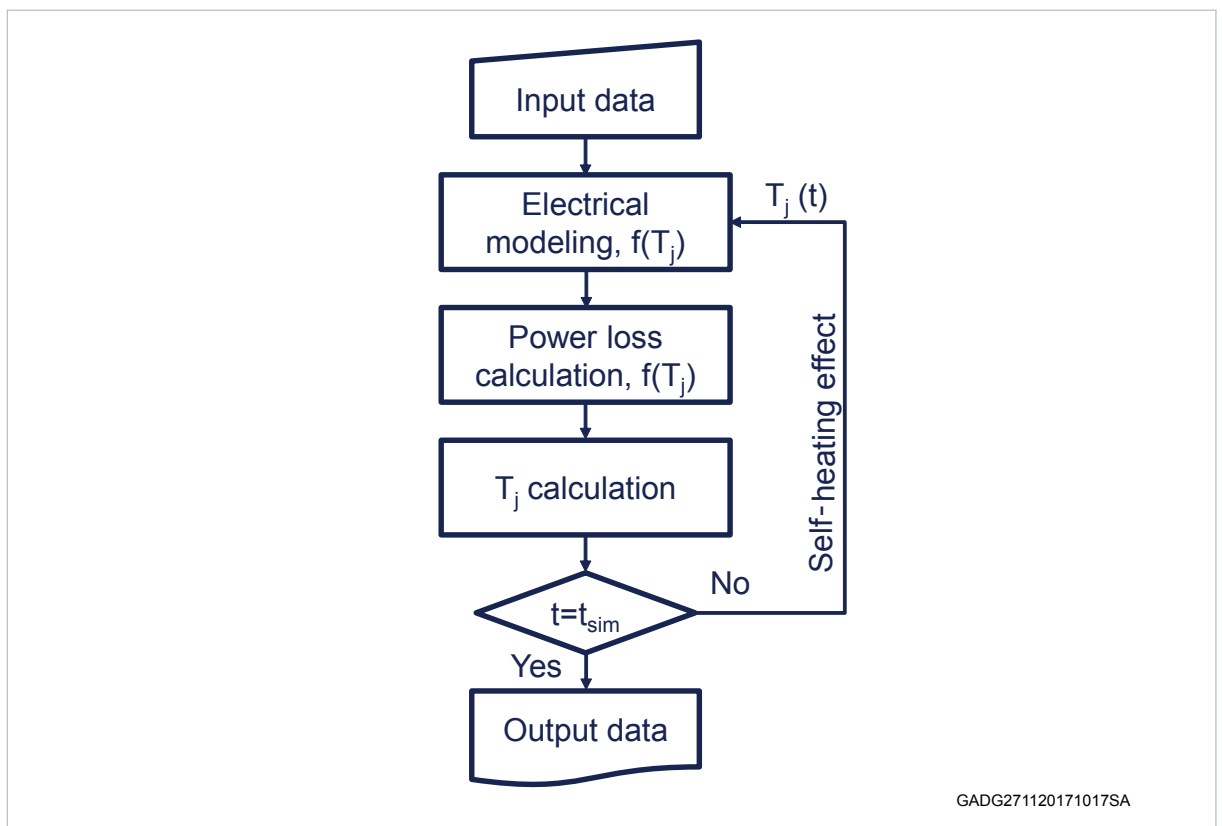
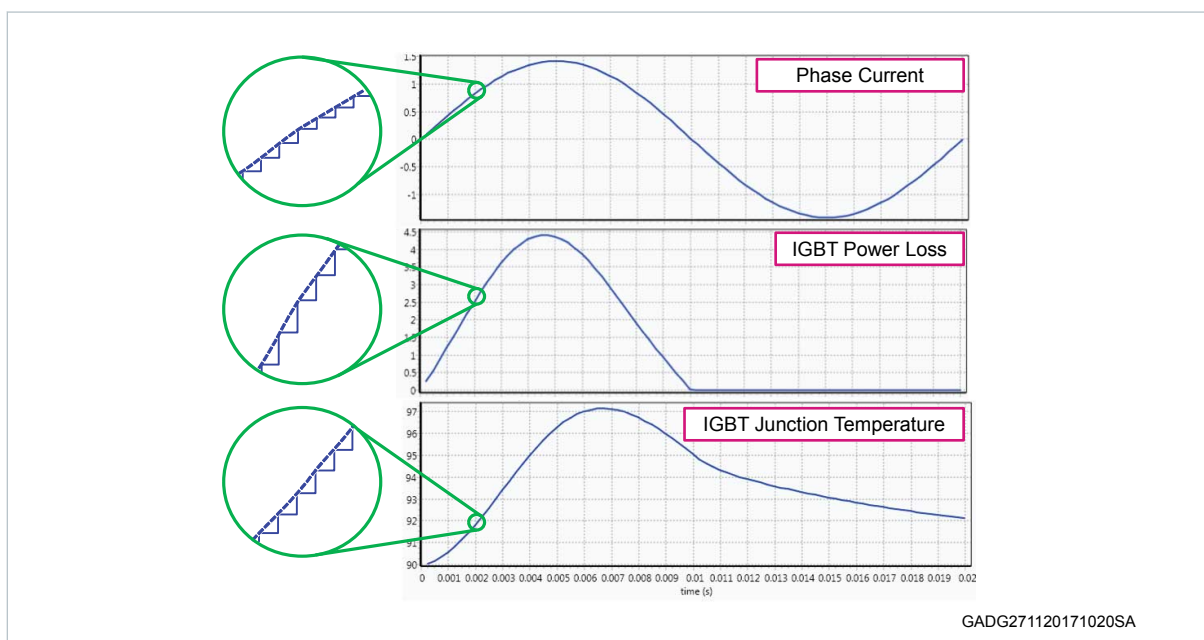


Figure 25. Discretization process shows some details of the discretization process applied on the output current and, thus, on the power loss and junction temperature used in the simulation.

In inverter applications, each IGBT or MOSFET, as well as each diode, conducts for half of the cycle-time of the sinusoidal output. Power loss appears for one half-period, while the IGBT/MOSFET or diode in the opposite inverter position is not active. Therefore, the junction temperature oscillates with the output frequency.

Thanks to the discretization process, the time-dependent power loss in the device follows the sinusoidal shape of the output current. Consequently, the time-dependent junction temperature follows closely the power loss variation as well, allowing a more precise estimation of the ripple and peak junction temperature.

Figure 25. Discretization process



Note that:

In MOSFET-based devices the power loss and the junction temperature ripple take in account also the body diode in both half-periods.

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Revision history

Table 1. Document revision history

Date	Revision	Changes
21-Dec-2017	1	Initial release
01-Mar-2018	2	ACEPACK packages included in the document. Document updated accordingly, minor text changes.

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