

# FFT and Spectrum Analyzer

## Objective:

- Understand the frequency domain and some of its uses
- Understand the Discrete Fourier Transform

**Preparation:** (i) PC and data acquisition system (ii) FFT software

## Background:

A signal can be observed from two different domains:

1. The time domain
2. The frequency domain

A spectrometer, e.g. a prism, splits light into its component colors which provides its spectral content. This is similar to the trace on a spectrum analyzer, where the abscissa is the frequency and the ordinate is the signals amplitude at that frequency. We have been familiar with the *time domain* signal such as the trace on an oscilloscope where the ordinate is the signals amplitude, and the abscissa is the time variable.

Any signal can be fully described in either of these domains and they are related by a tool called the *Fourier transform*. The Discrete Fourier Transform (DFT) is used to produce frequency analysis of discrete non-periodic signals.

It is usually employed to transform data which may arise from either an actual continuous time process or perhaps a discrete time process which is being analysed from a continuous time system approach. The DFT is usually used to approximate the Fourier transform of a continuous time process, and it is necessary to understand some of the limitations inherent in this approach.

There are three possible phenomena that result in errors between the computed and the desired transform. These three phenomena are (a) *aliasing*, (b) *leakage*, and (c) *the picket-fence effect*.

(a) *Aliasing*. The only solution to the aliasing problem is to ensure that the sampling rate is high enough to avoid any spectral overlap, or to use an *anti-aliasing filter*.

(b) *Leakage*. This problem arises because of the practical requirement of the signal to be a finite interval. The process of terminating the signal after a finite number of terms is equivalent to multiplying the signal by a *window function*. The net effect is a

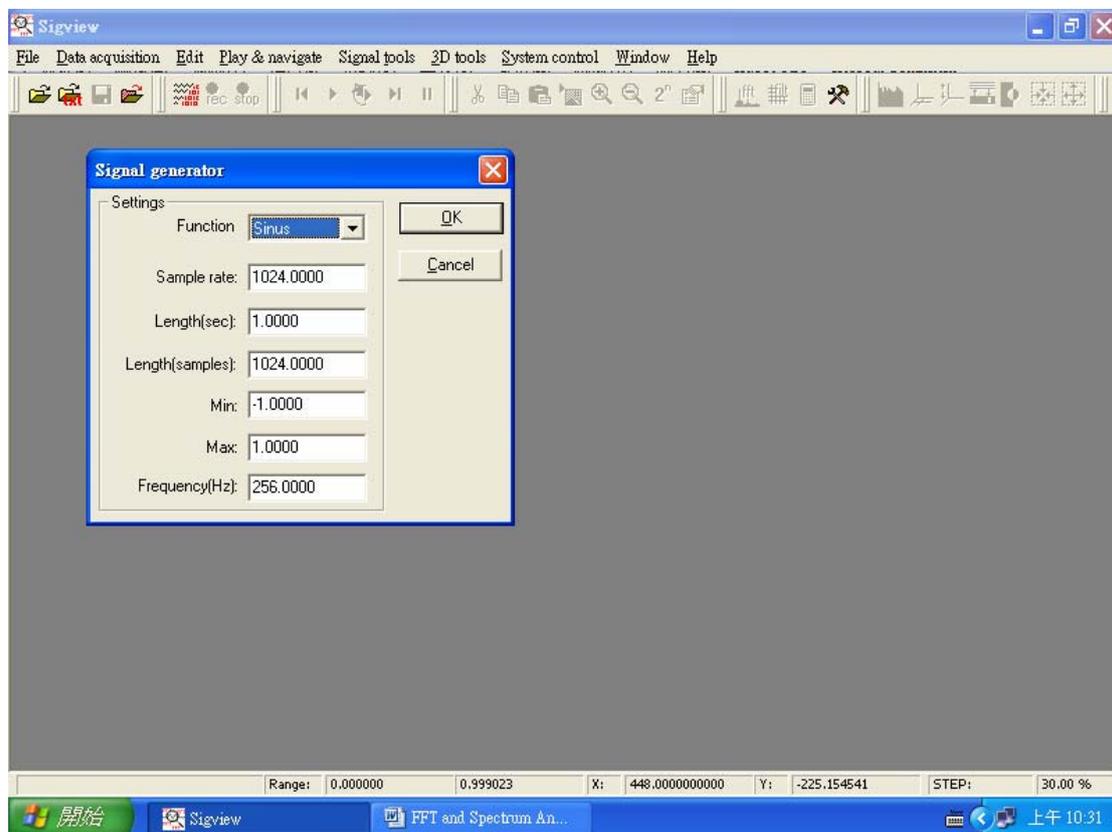
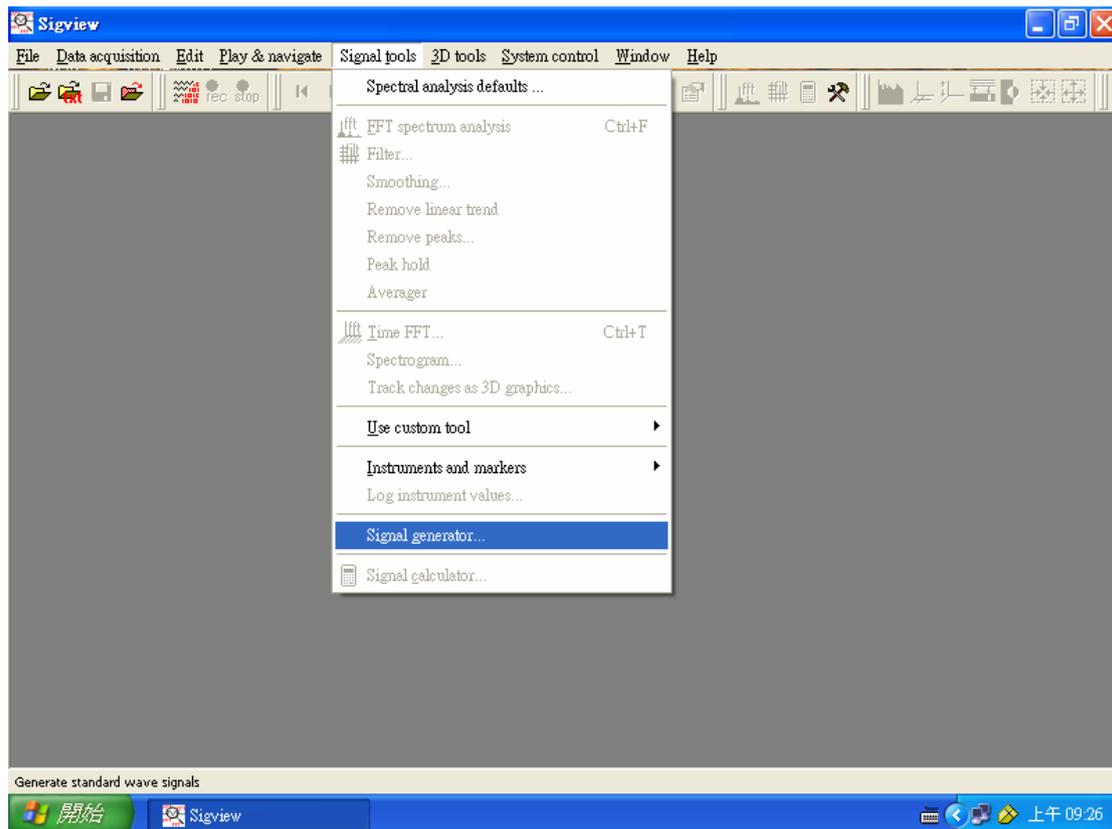
distortion of the spectrum. There is a spreading or leakage of the spectral components away from the correct frequency, resulting in an undesirable modification of the total spectrum.

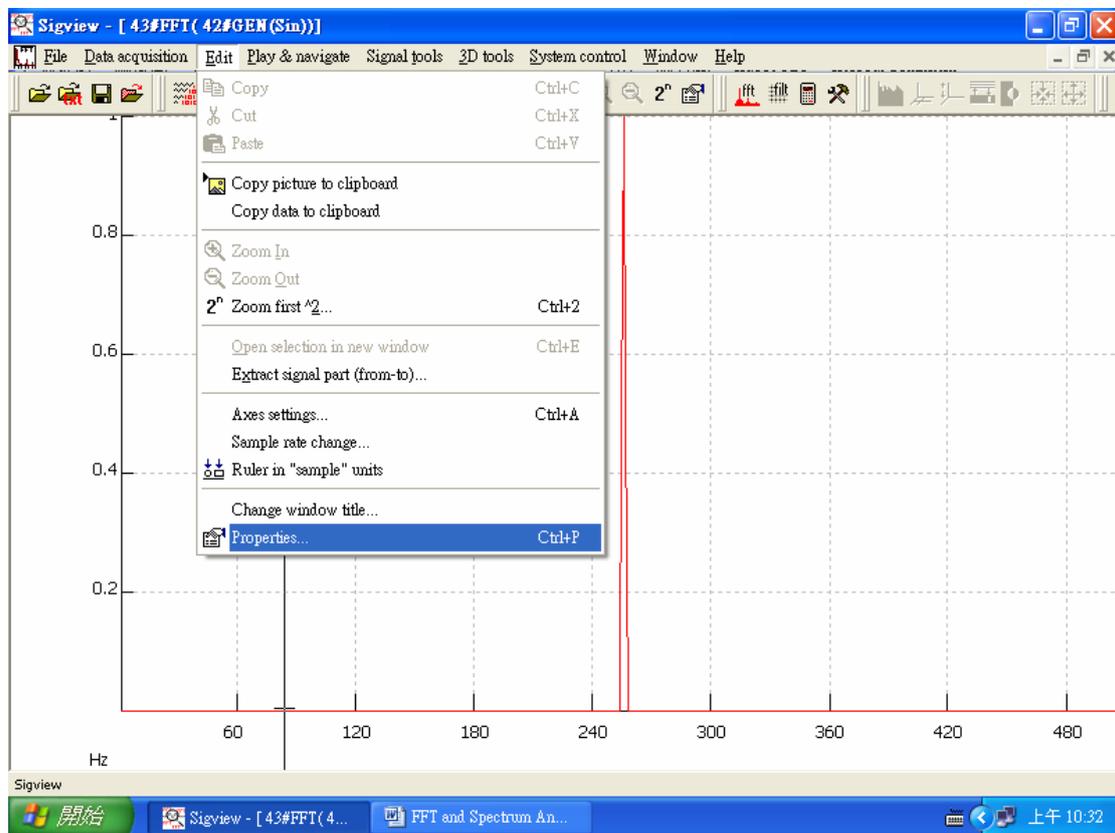
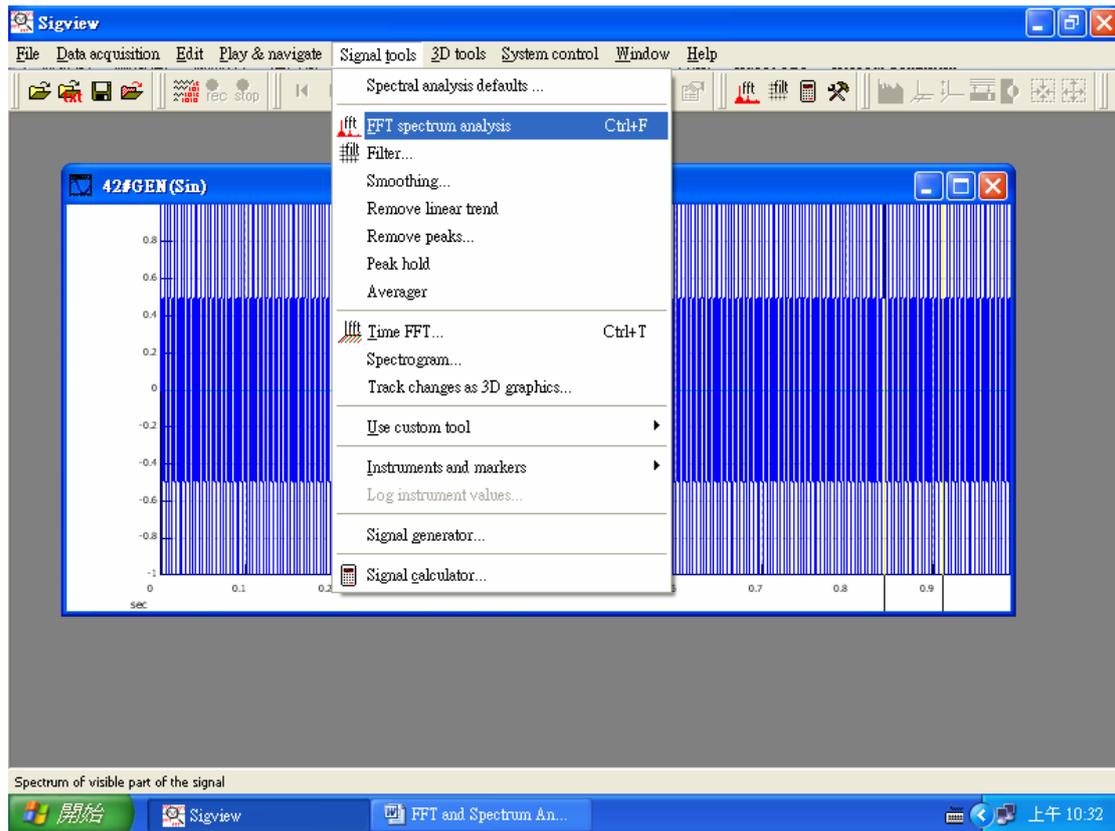
(c) *Picket-Fence Effect*. This effect is produced by the inability of the DFT to observe the spectrum as a continuous function, since computation of the spectrum is limited to integer multiples of the fundamental frequency  $F$  (reciprocal of the sample length). Observation of the spectrum with the DFT is analogous to looking at it through a sort of "picket-fence," since we can observe the exact behavior only at discrete points. The major peak of a particular component could lie between two of the discrete transform lines, and the peak of this component might not be detected without some additional processing.

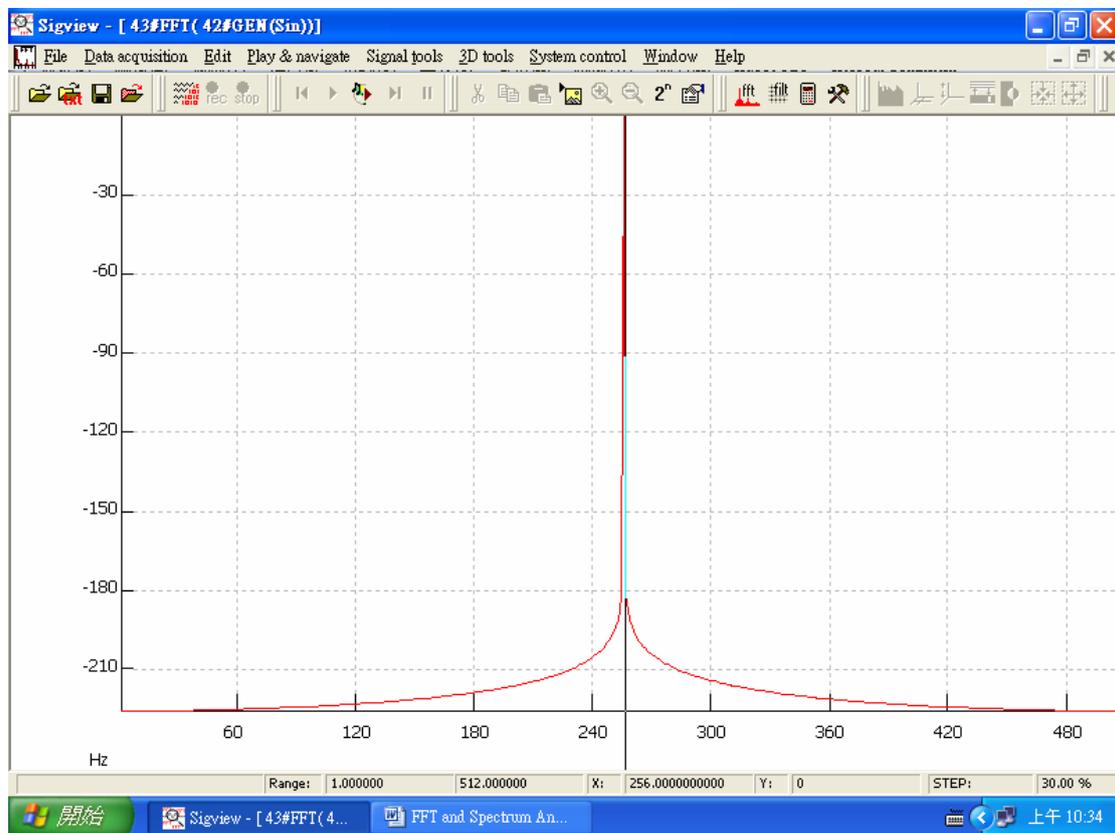
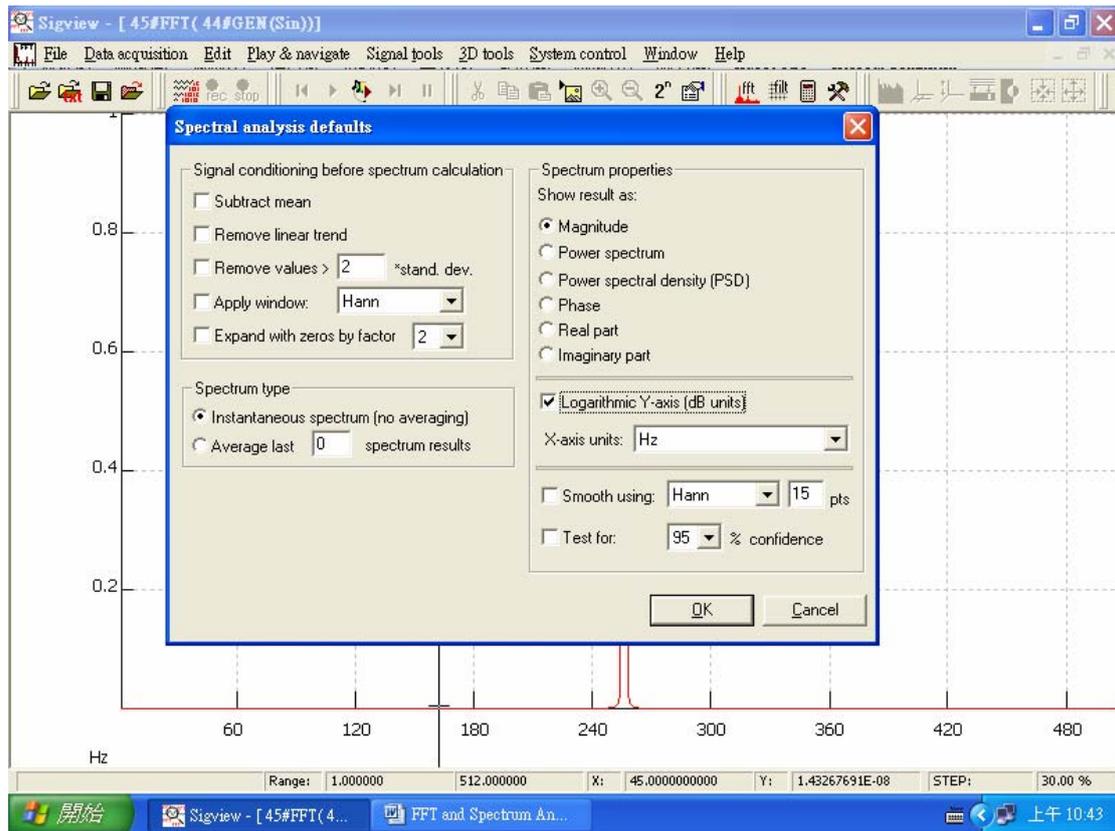
A fast Fourier transform (FFT) is an efficient algorithm to compute the DFT and its inverse. It reduces the number of computations needed for  $N$  points from  $2N^2$  to  $2N\log_2 N$ .

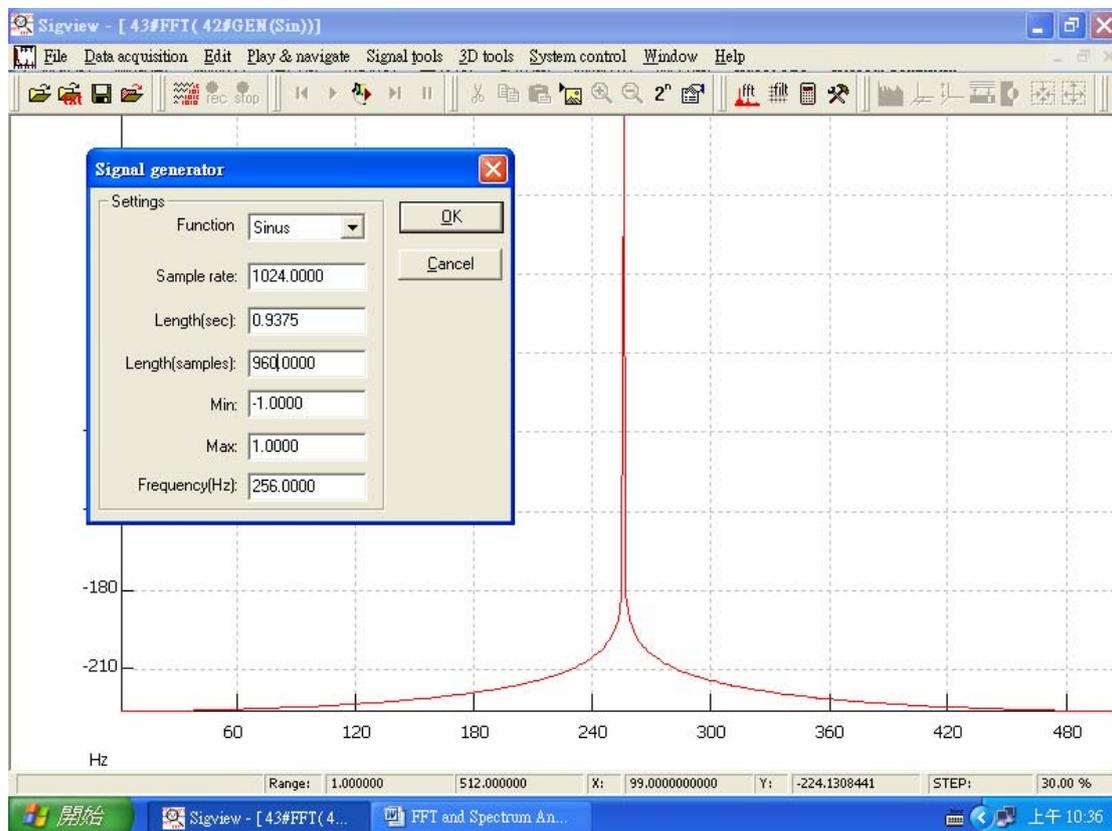
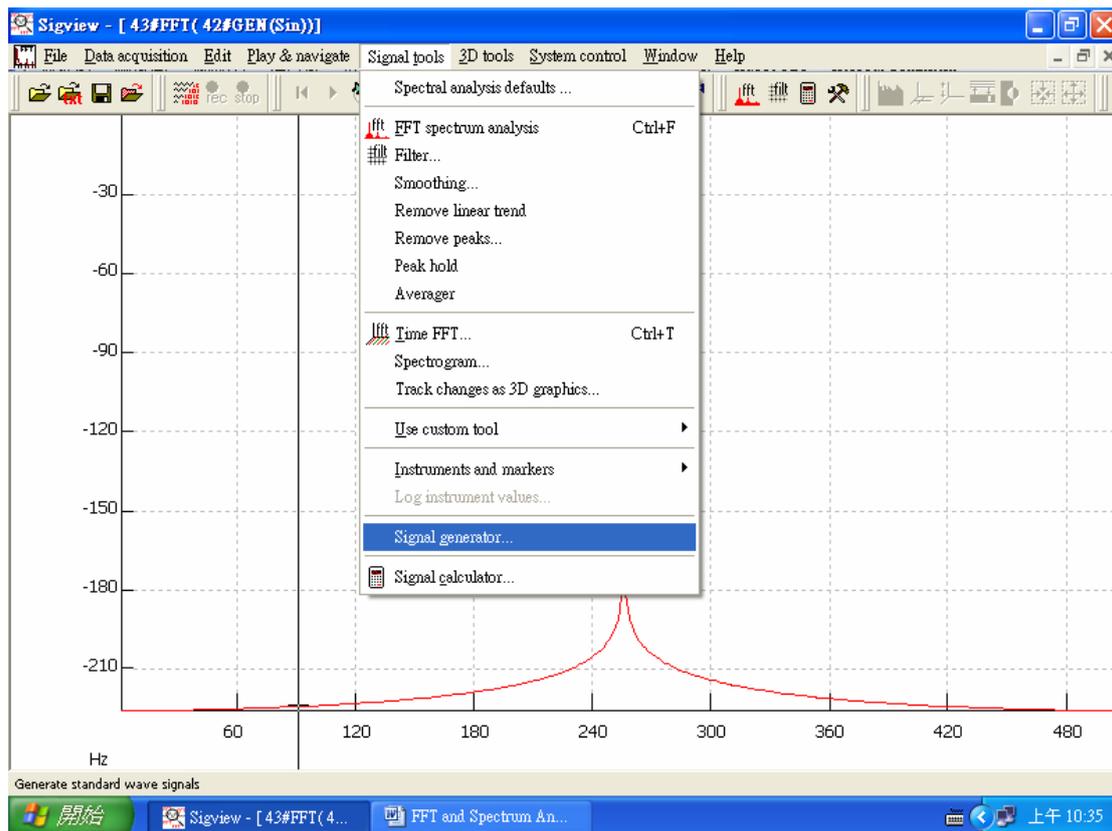
### **Procedure:**

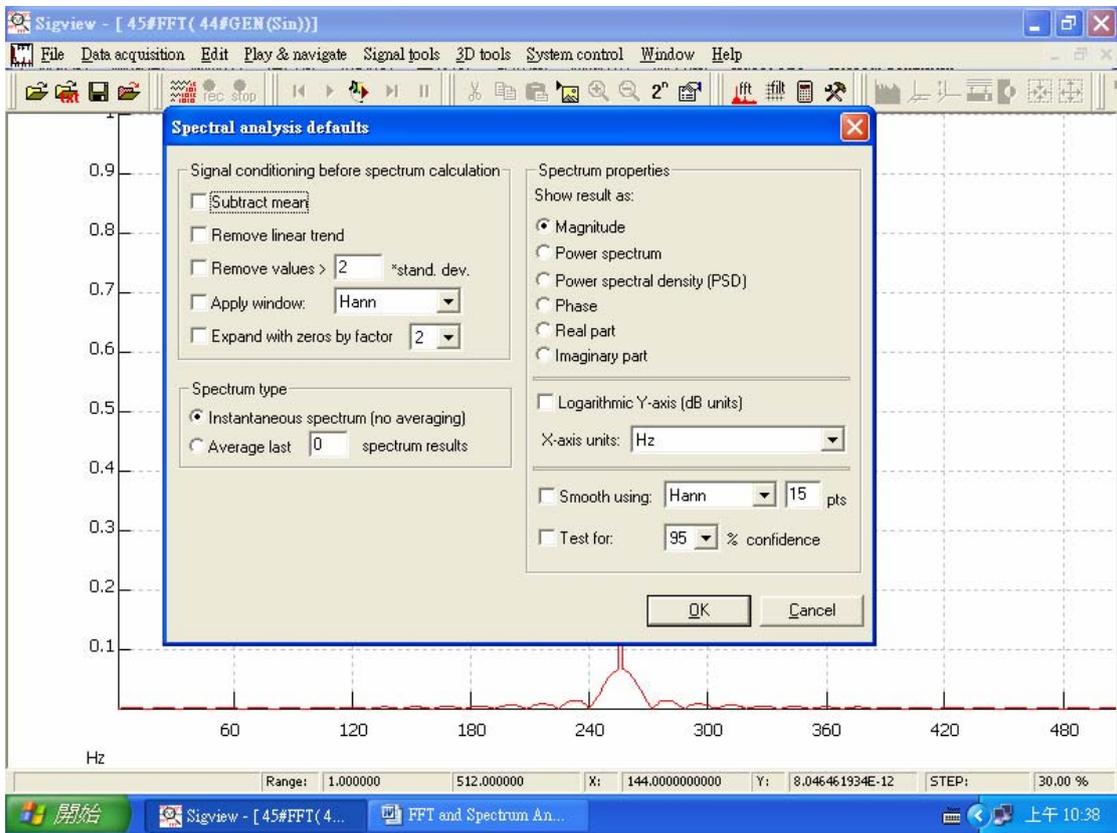
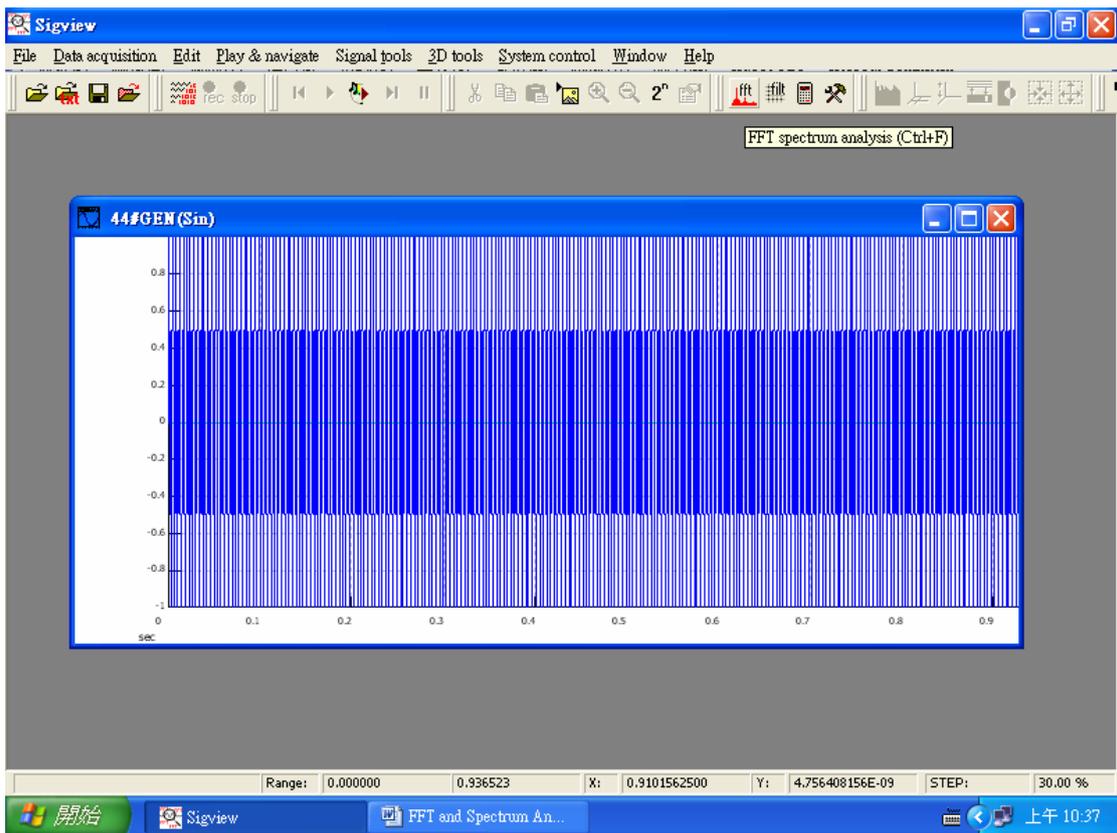
1. Turn on the PC. Run the program "Sigview."
2. Follow the procedure given below to be familiar with the software.
3. Observe the results carefully and pay attention to the *sampling* (sampling rate) and *truncation* (data length) effect.
4. Generate your own signals and perform FFT to observe their spectra such that you can complete your report.
5. Use sinus and step functions only.

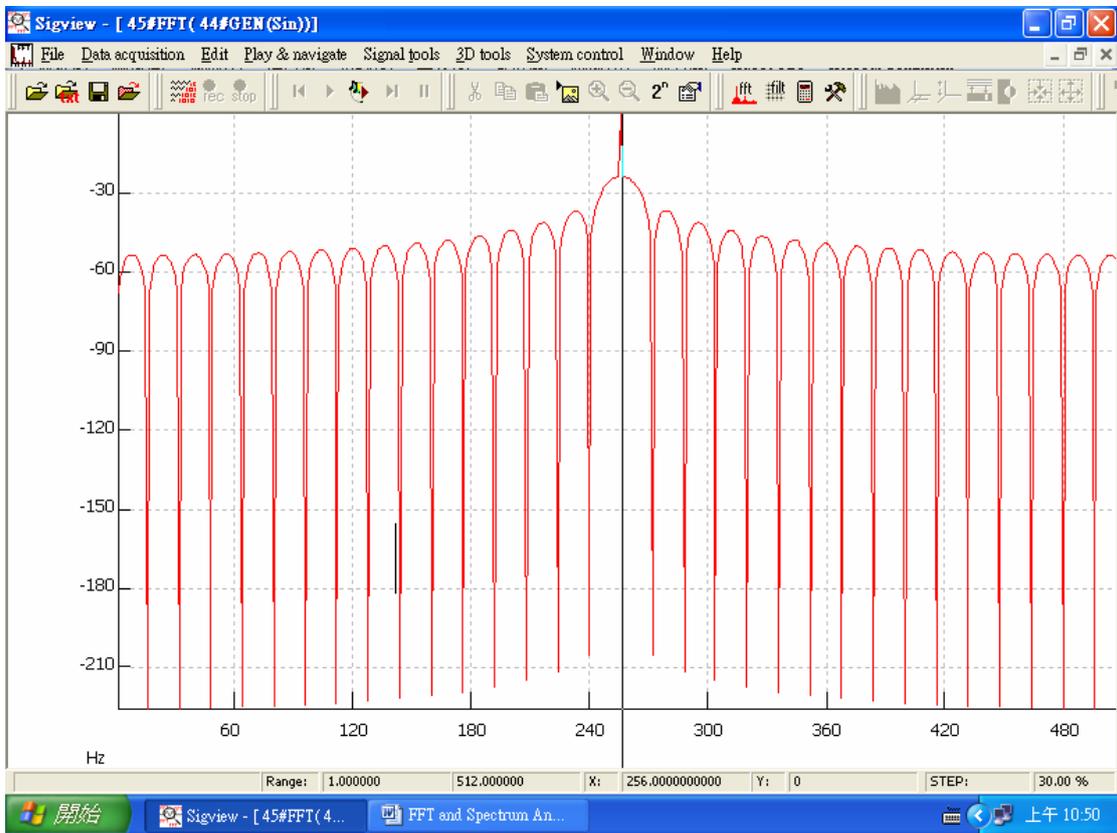
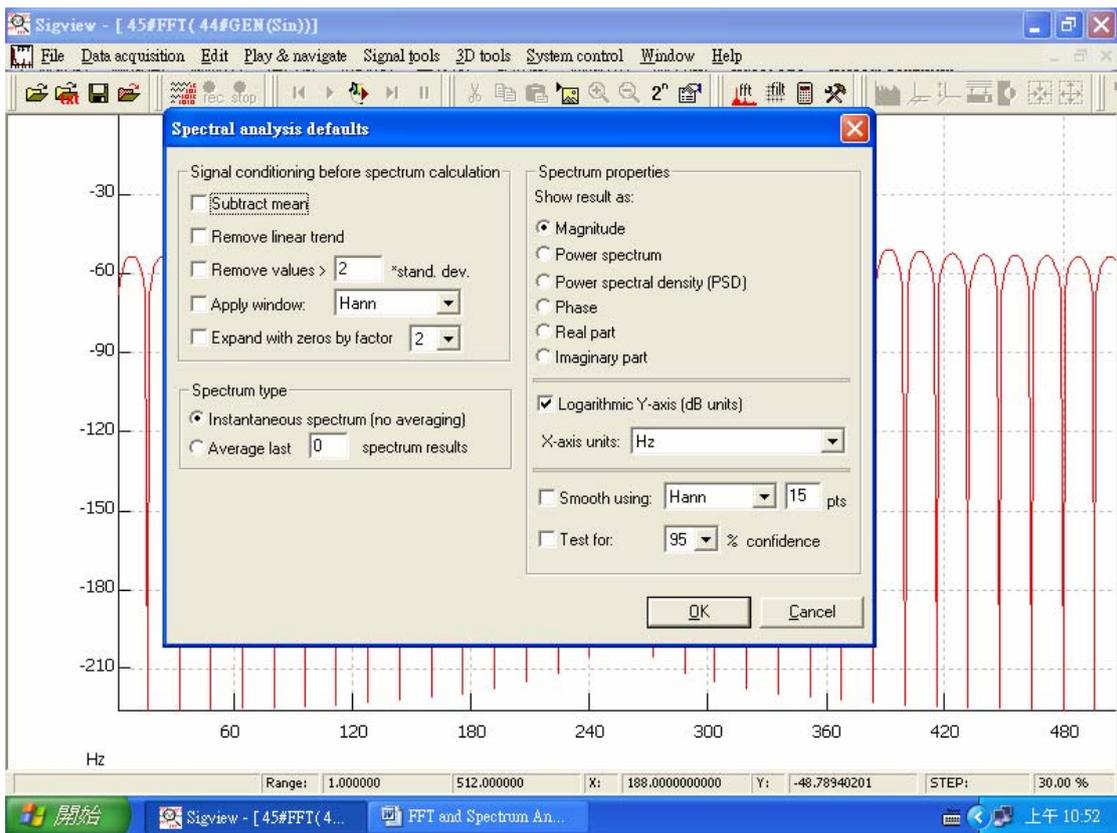


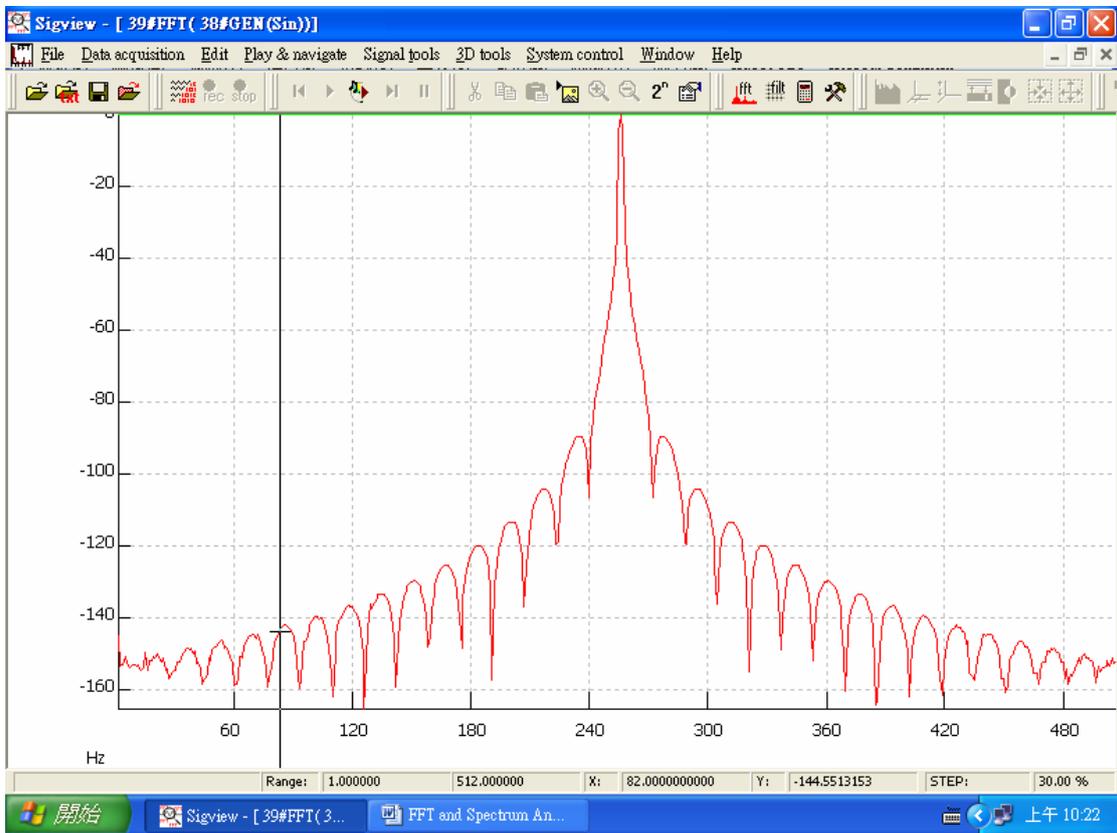
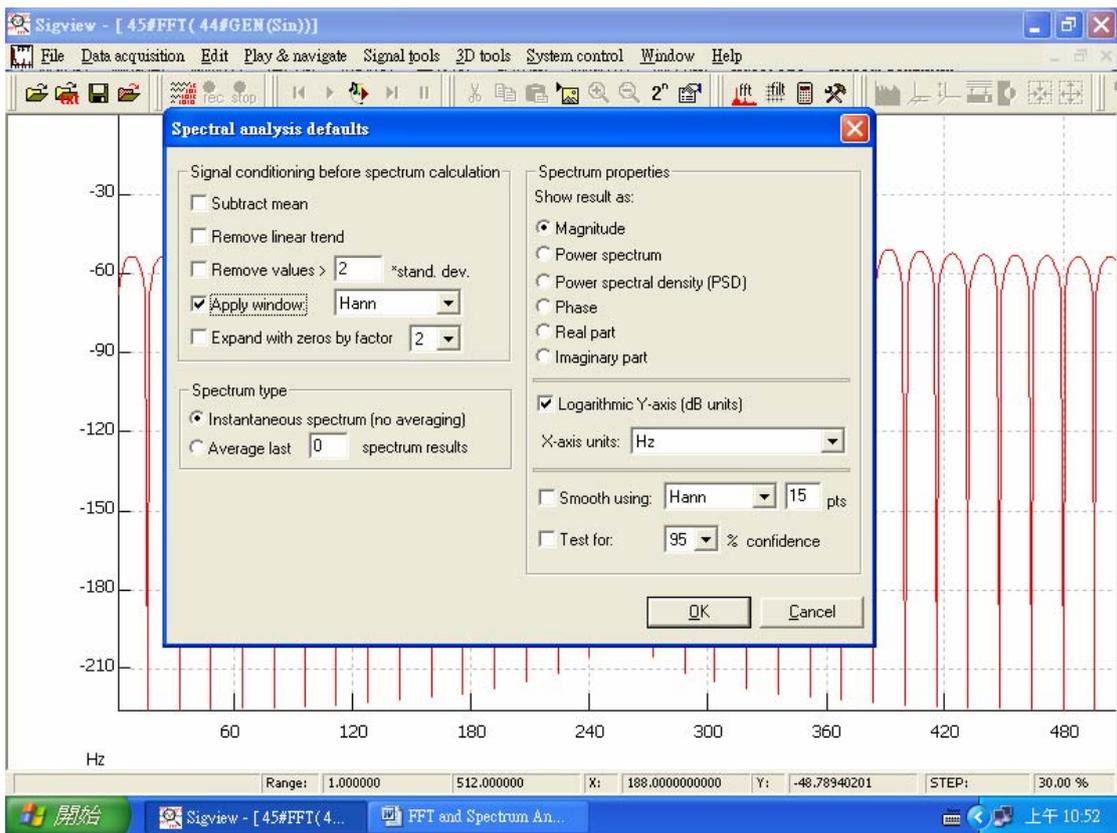


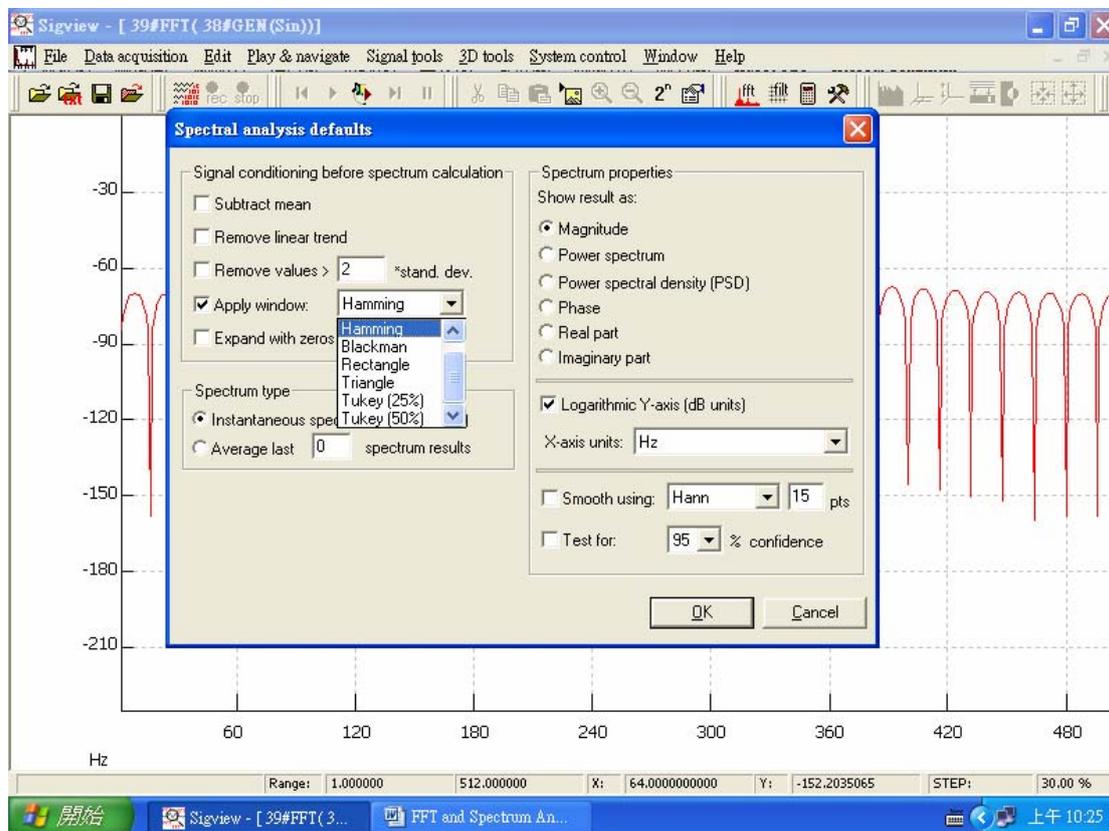
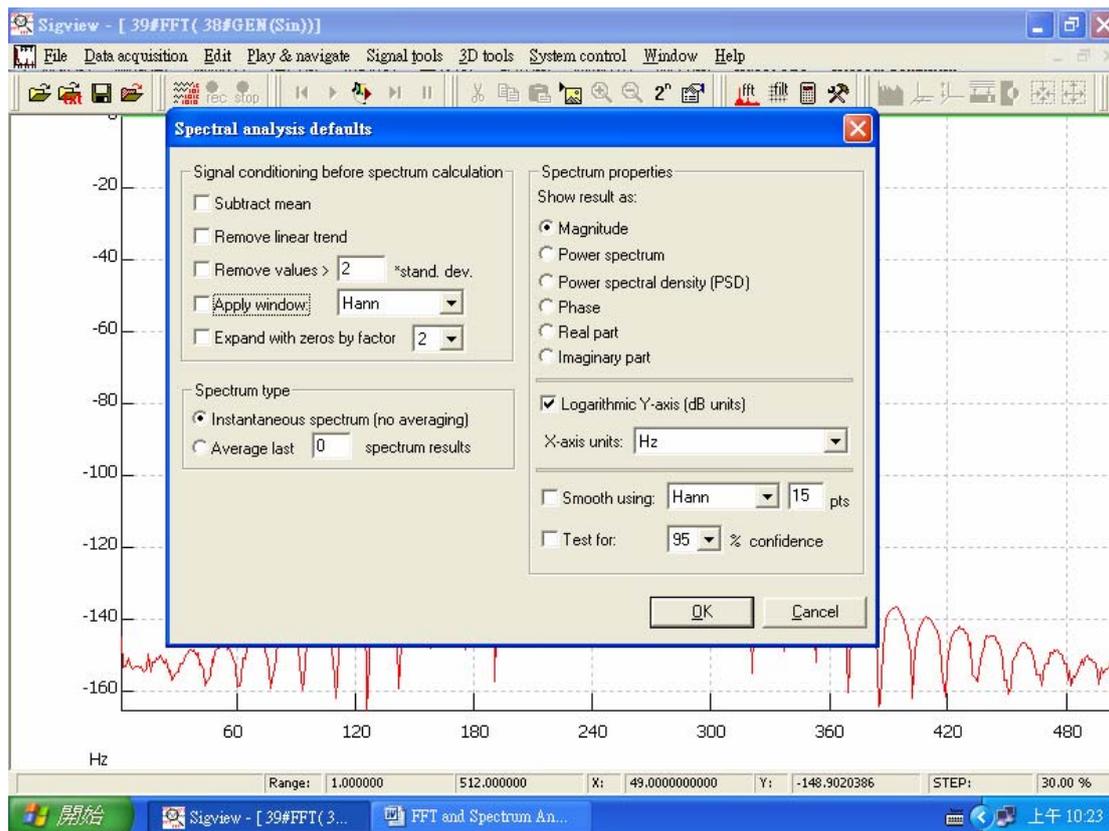


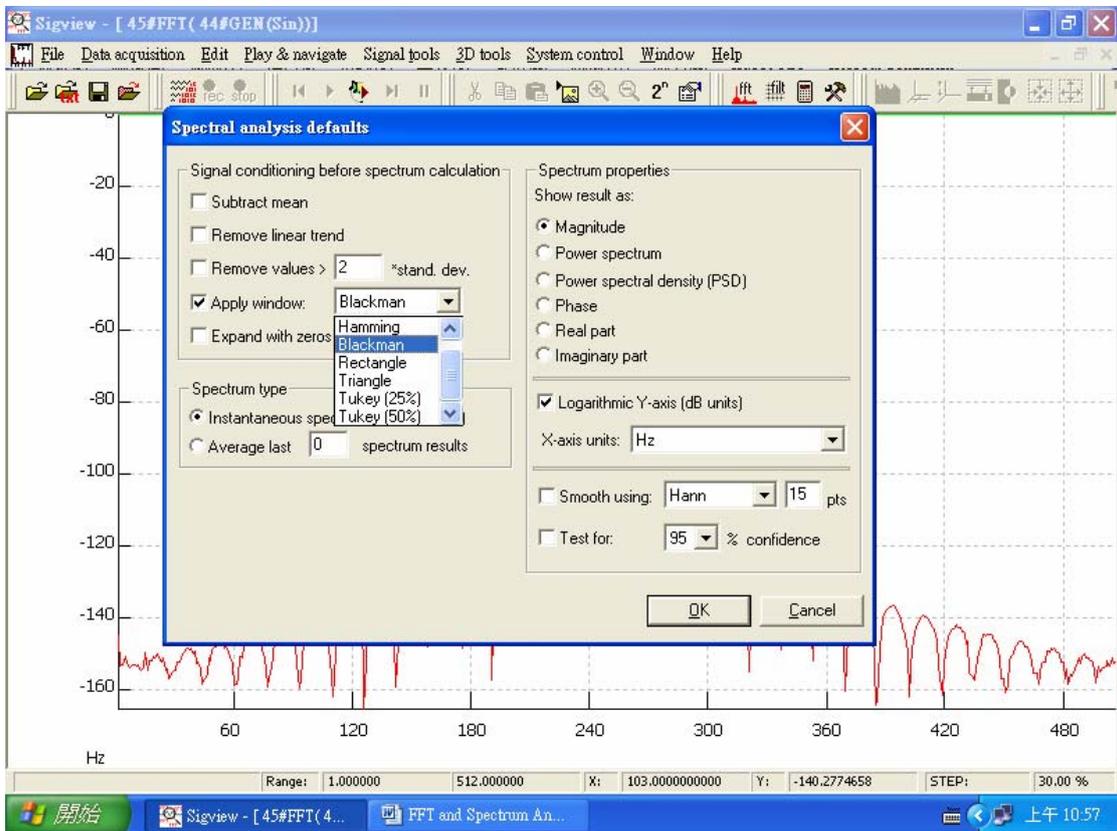
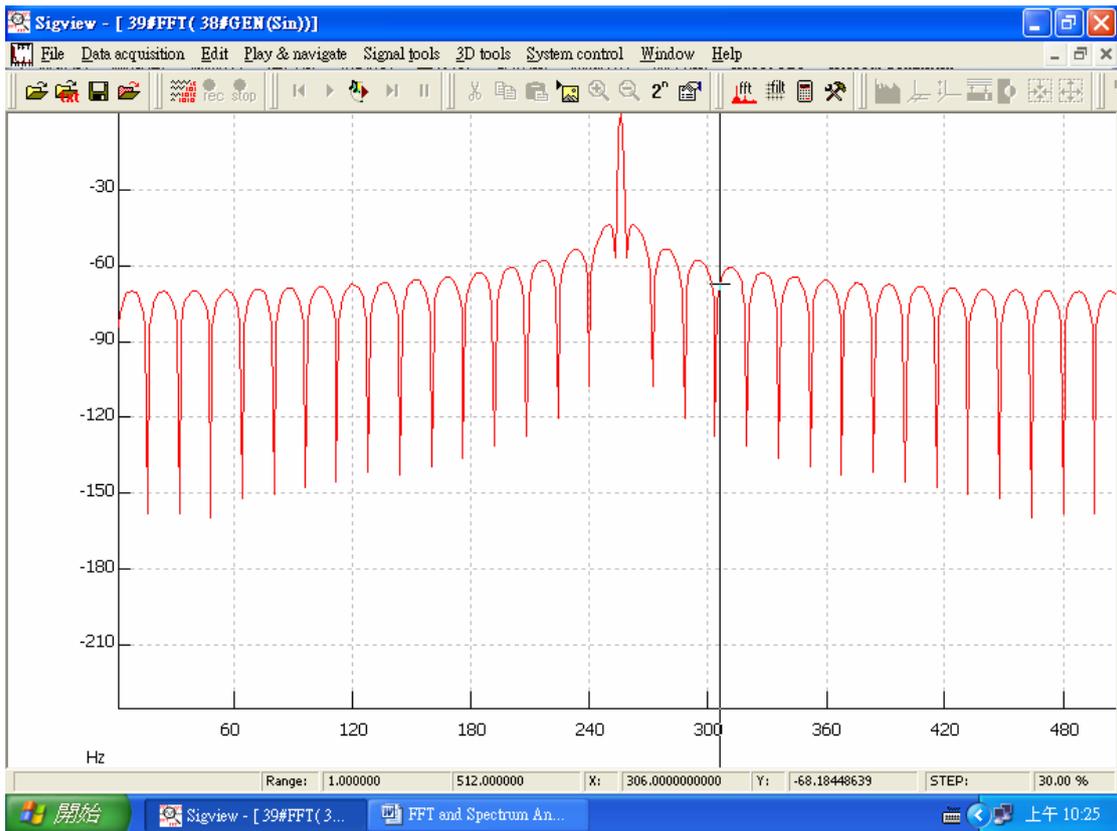


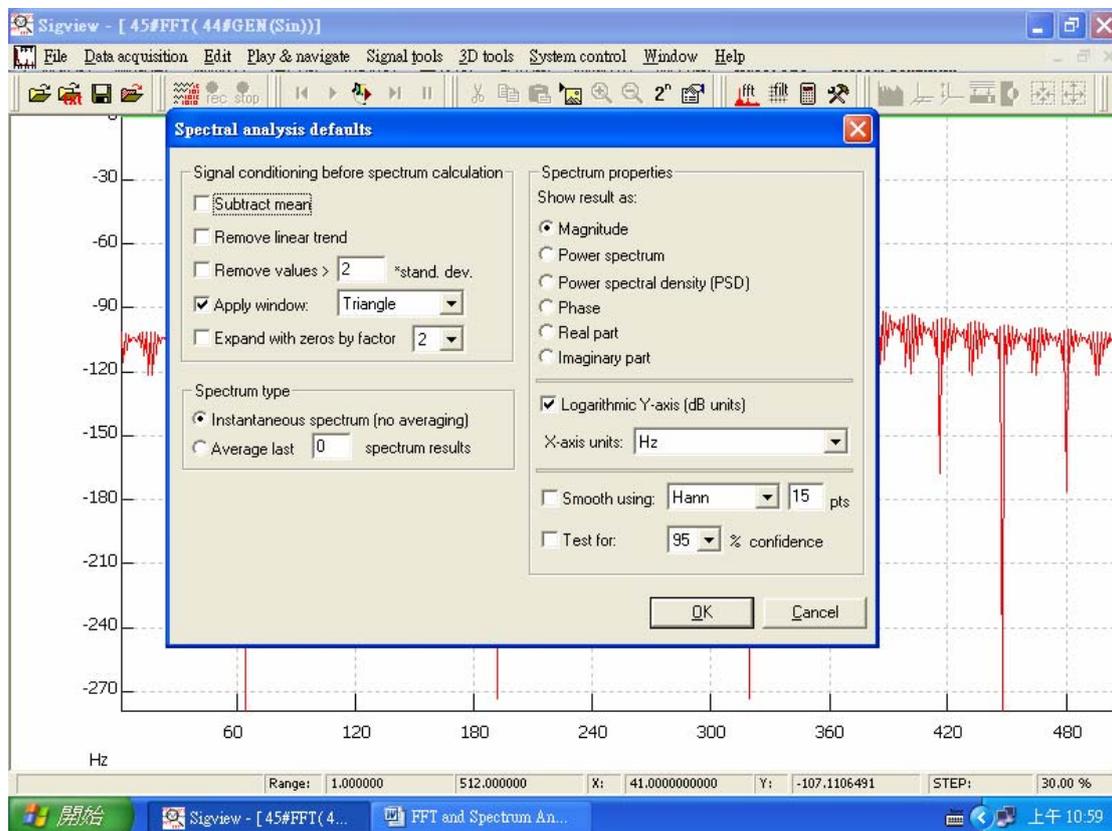
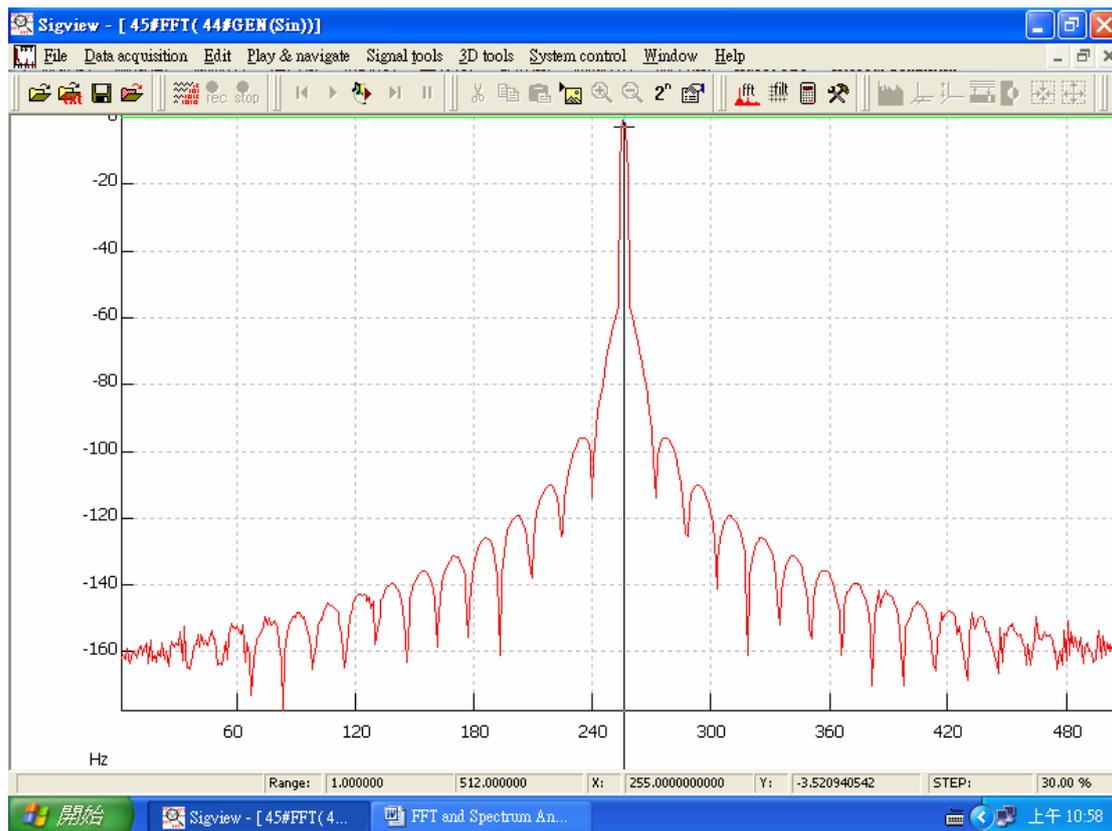


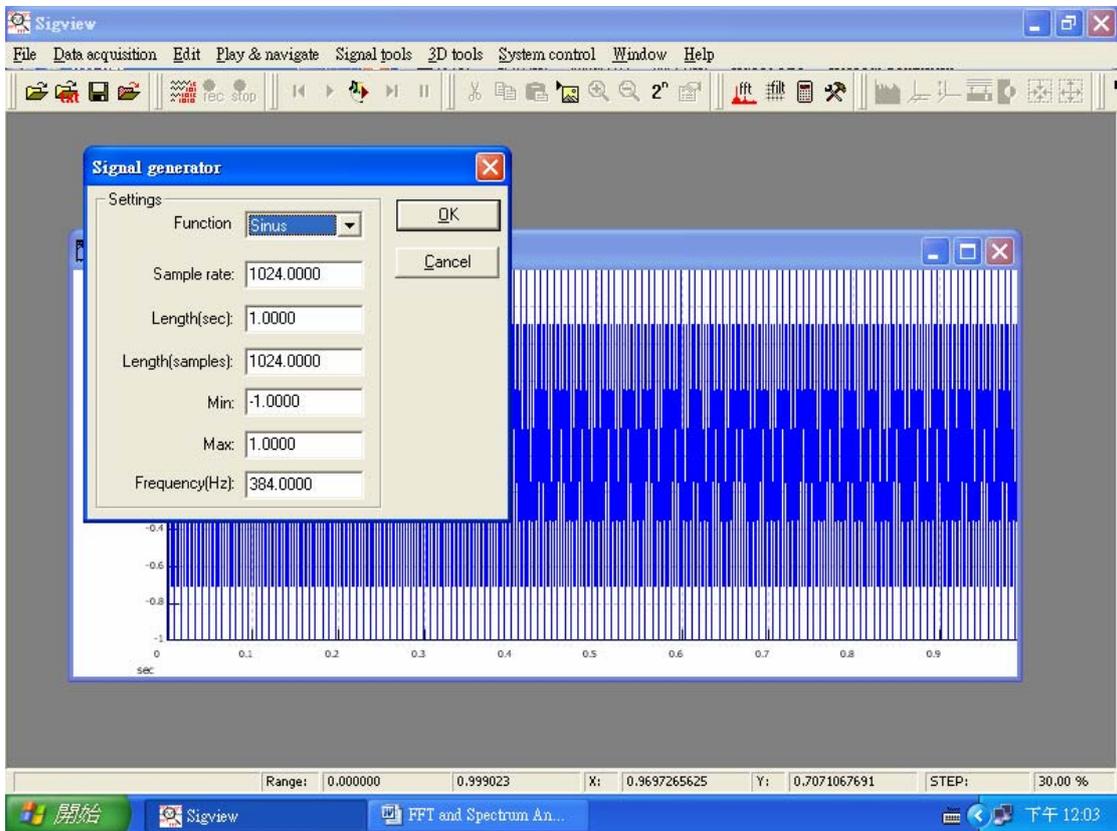
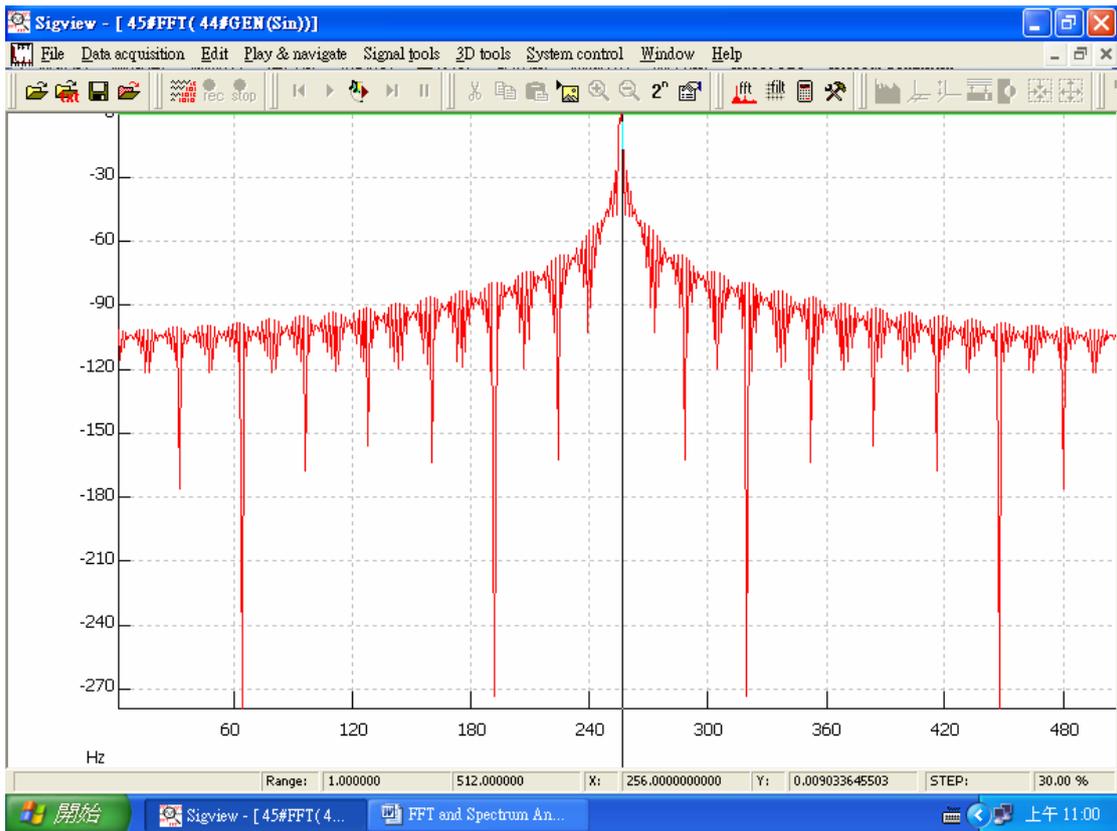


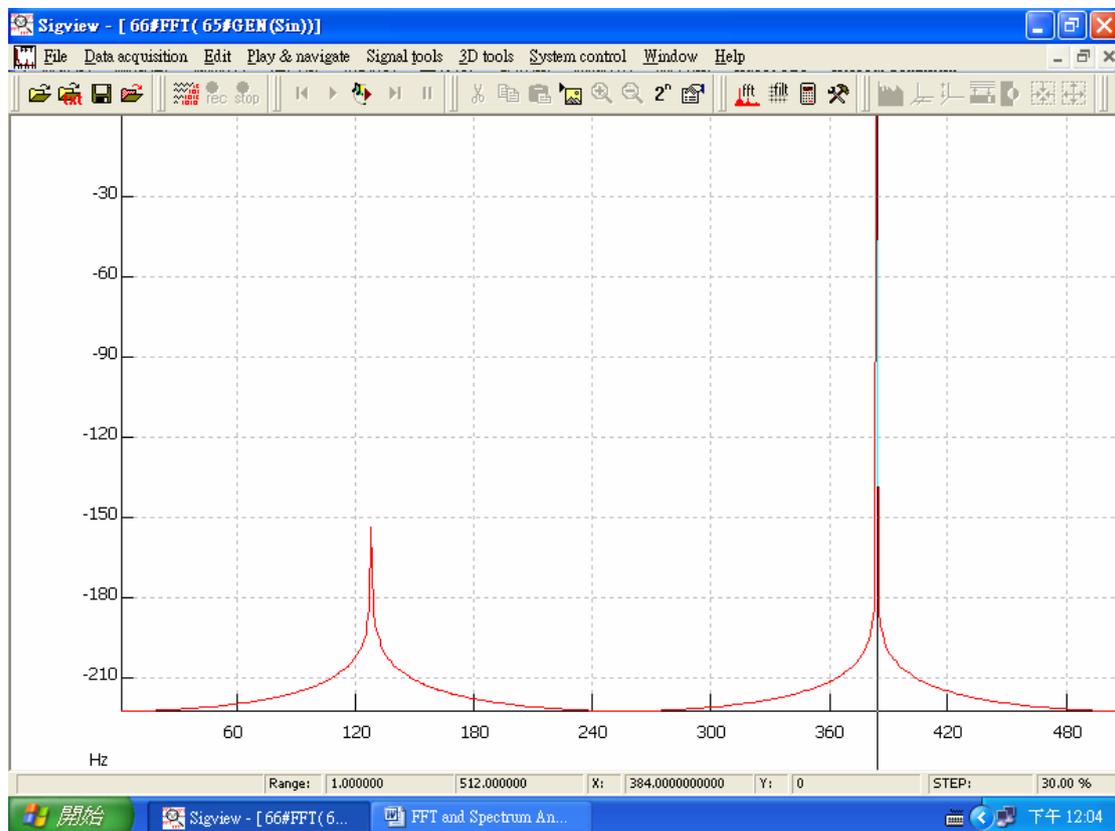
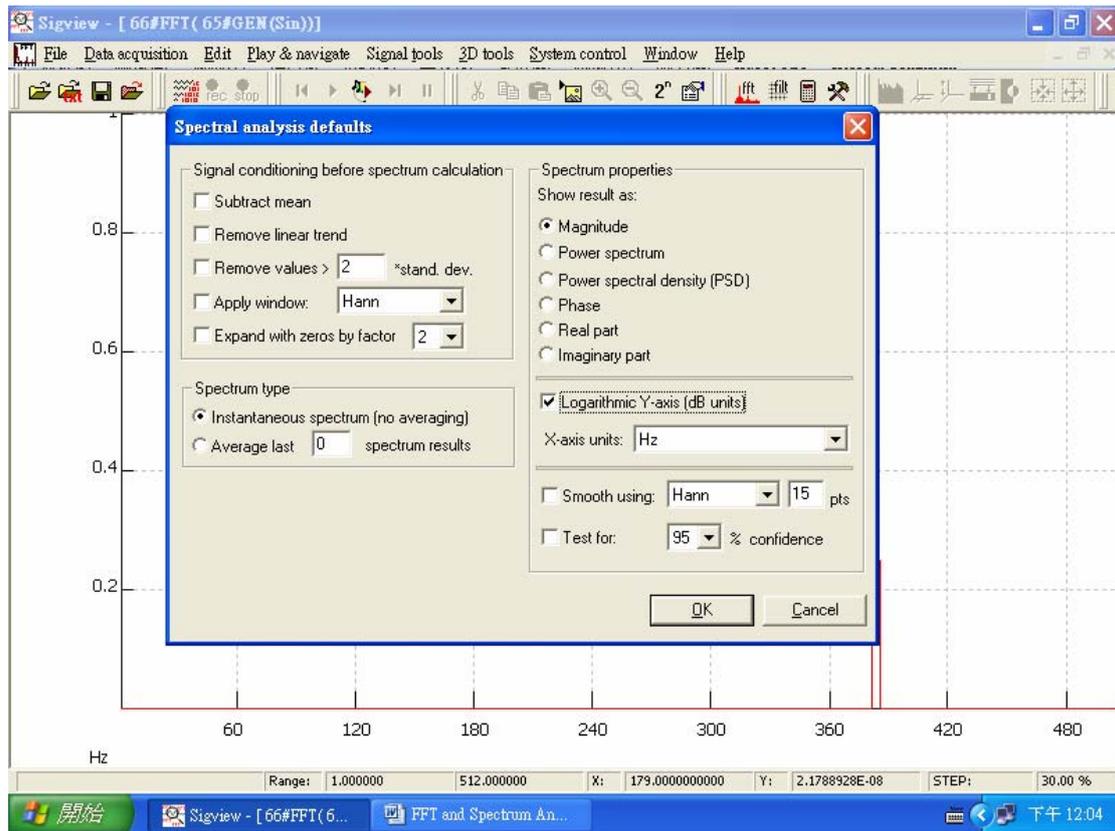


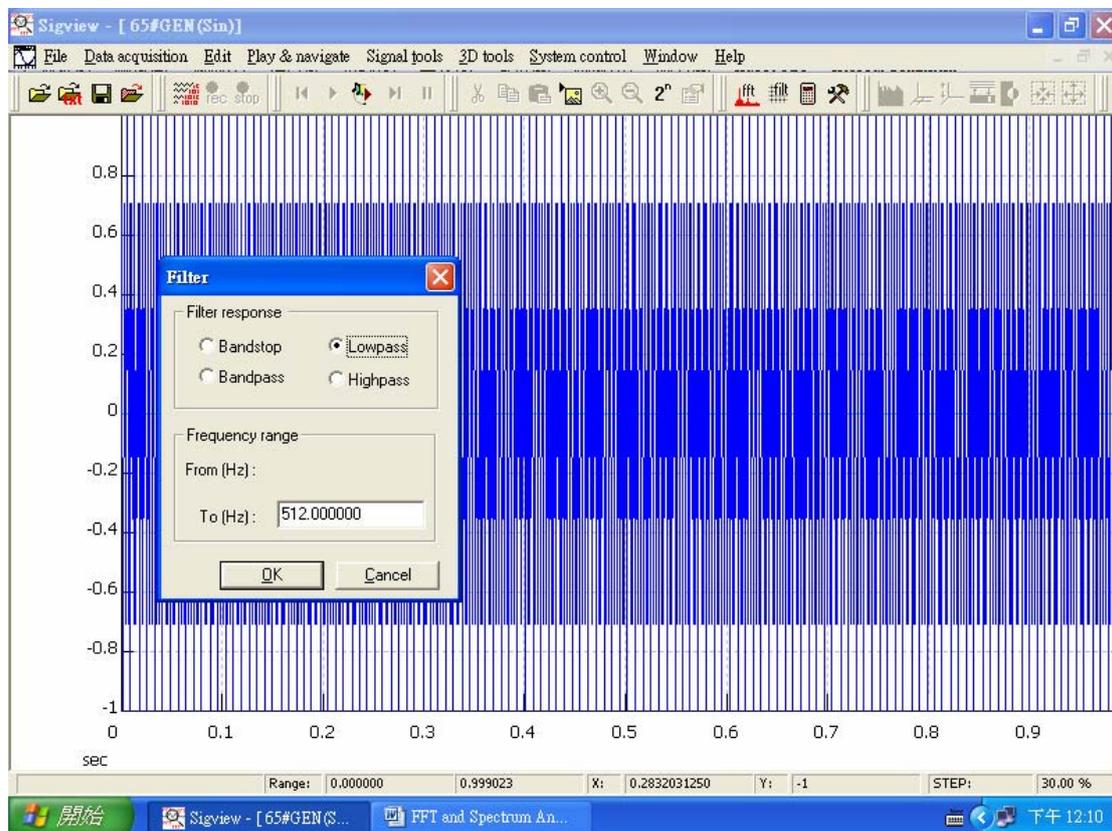
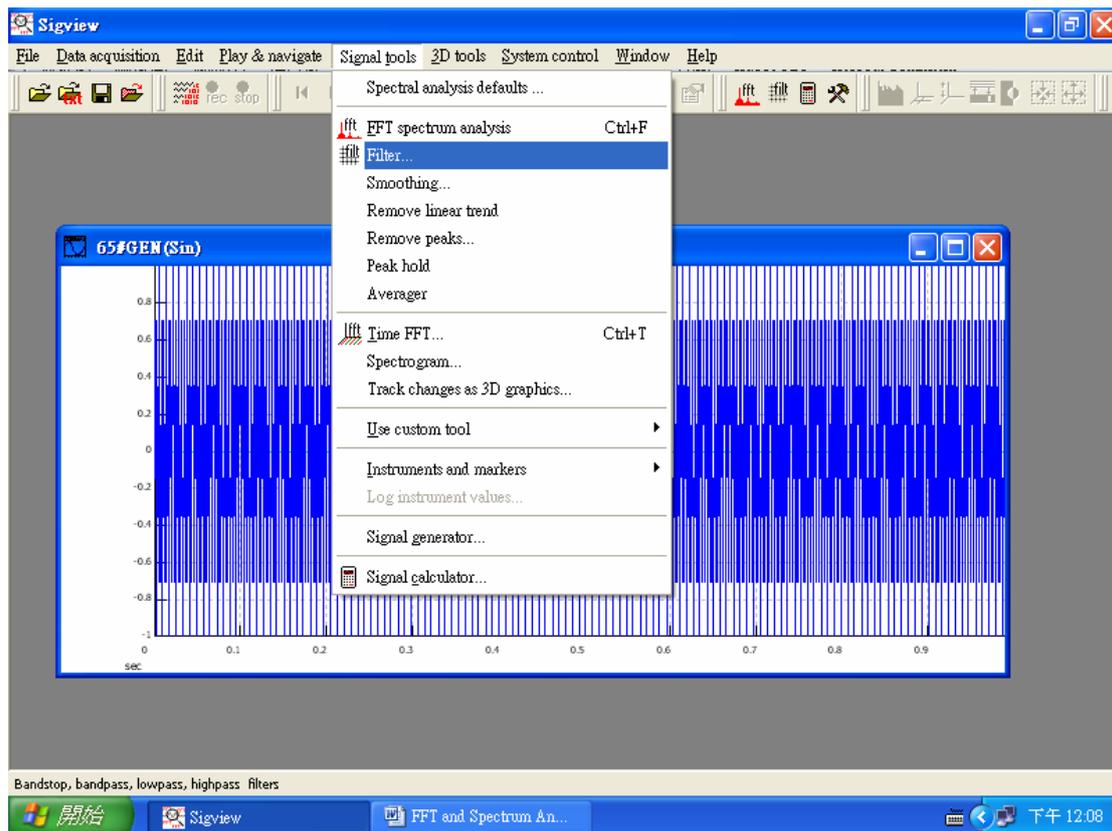


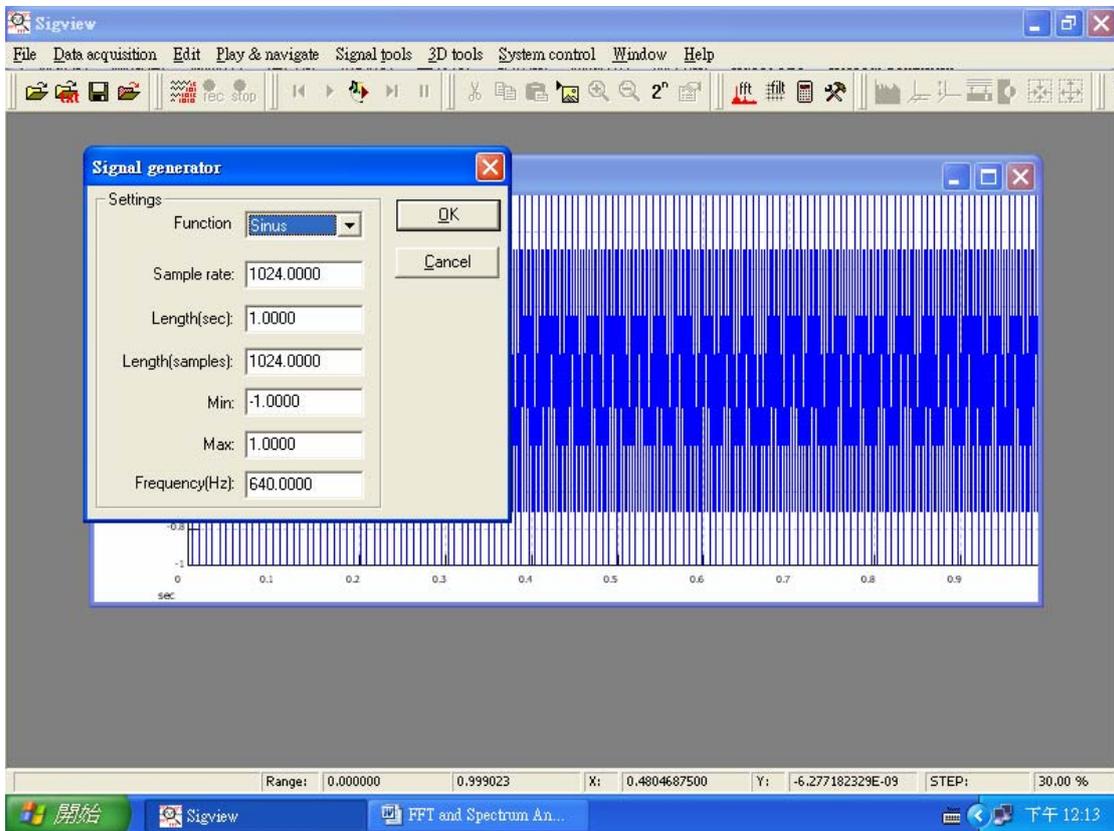
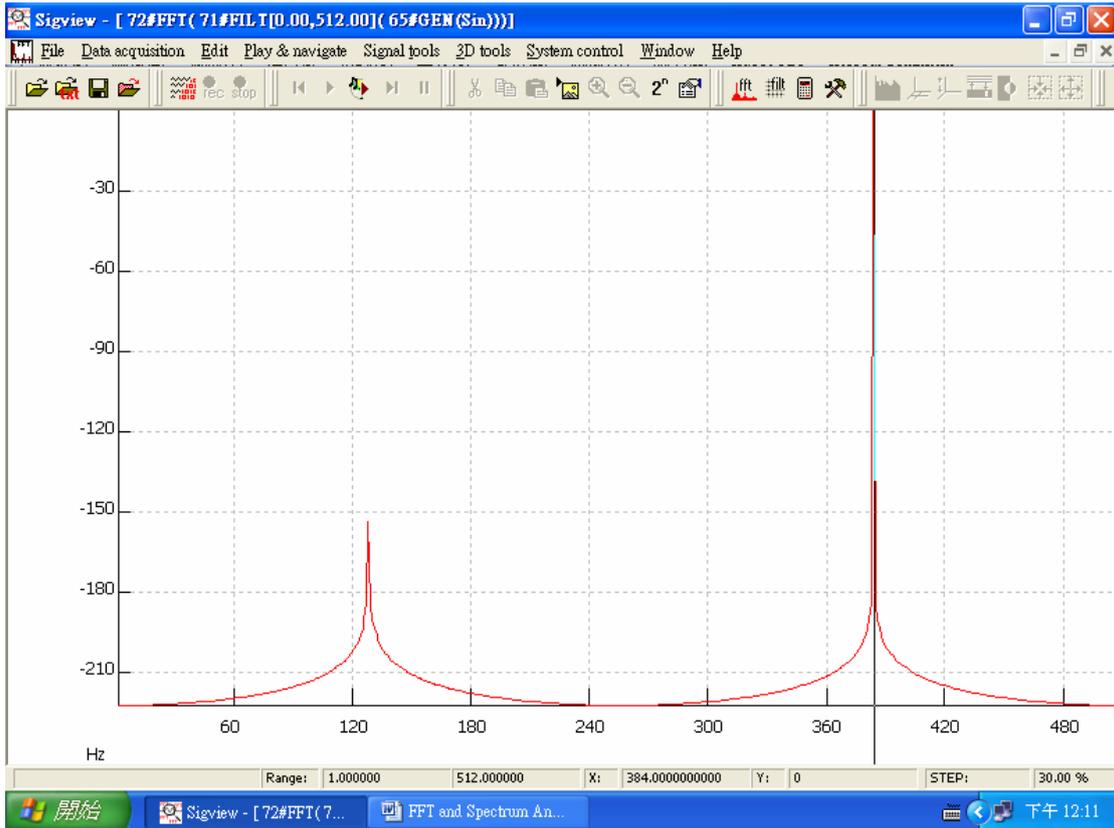


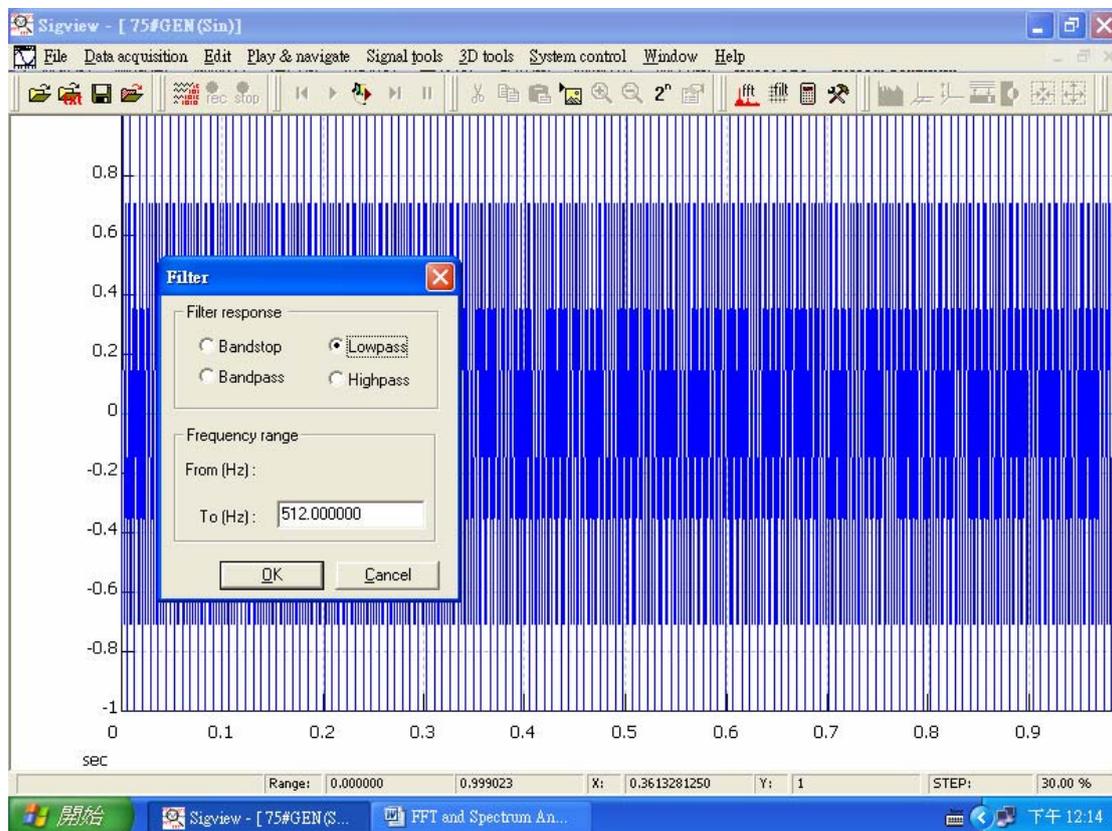
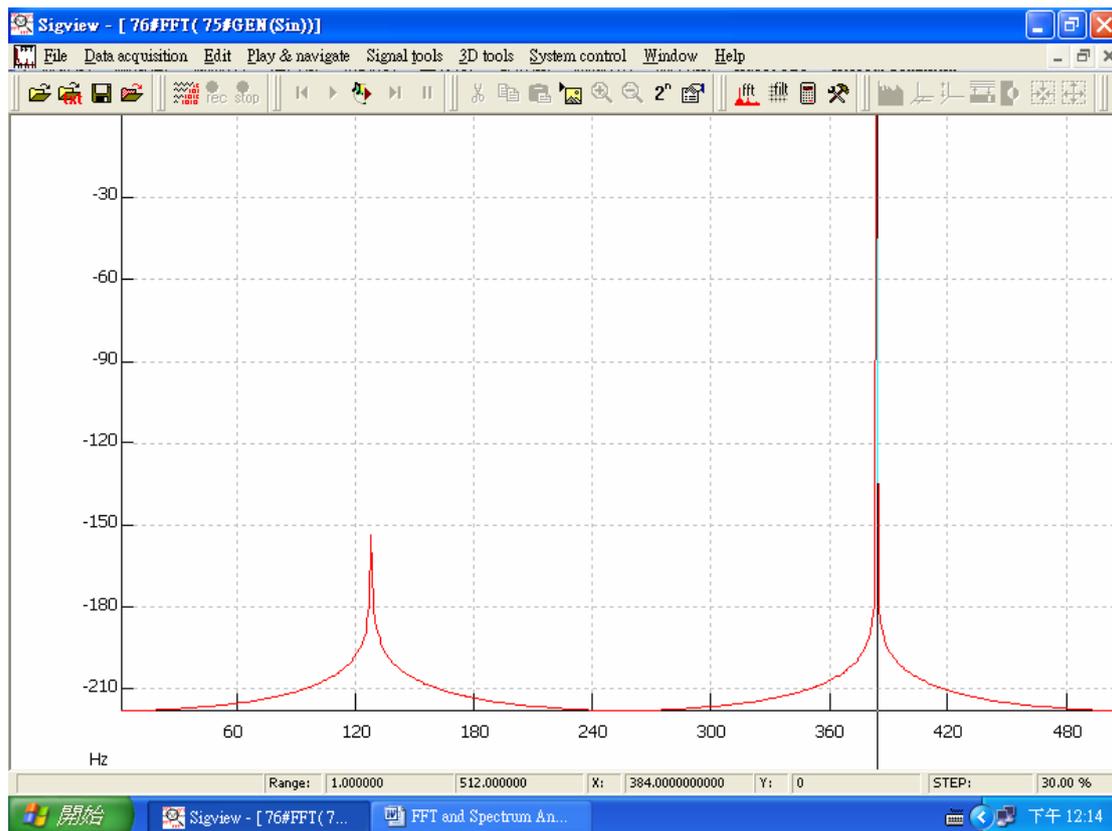


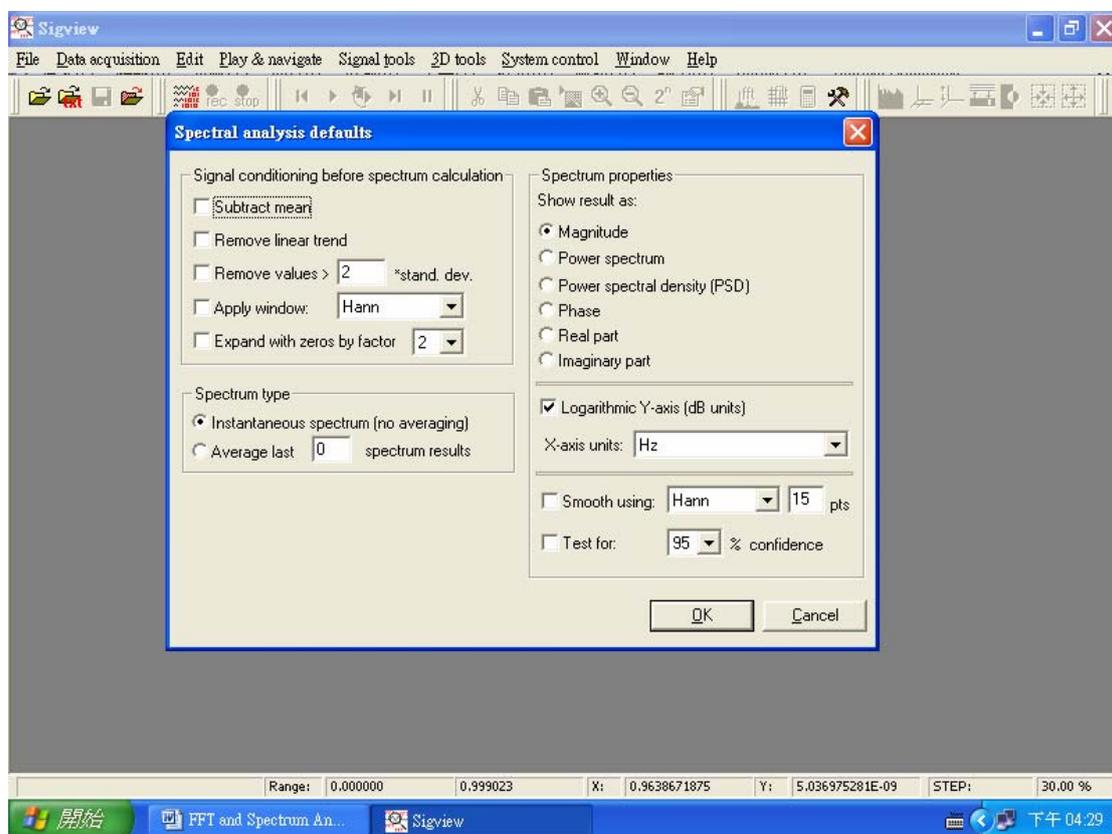
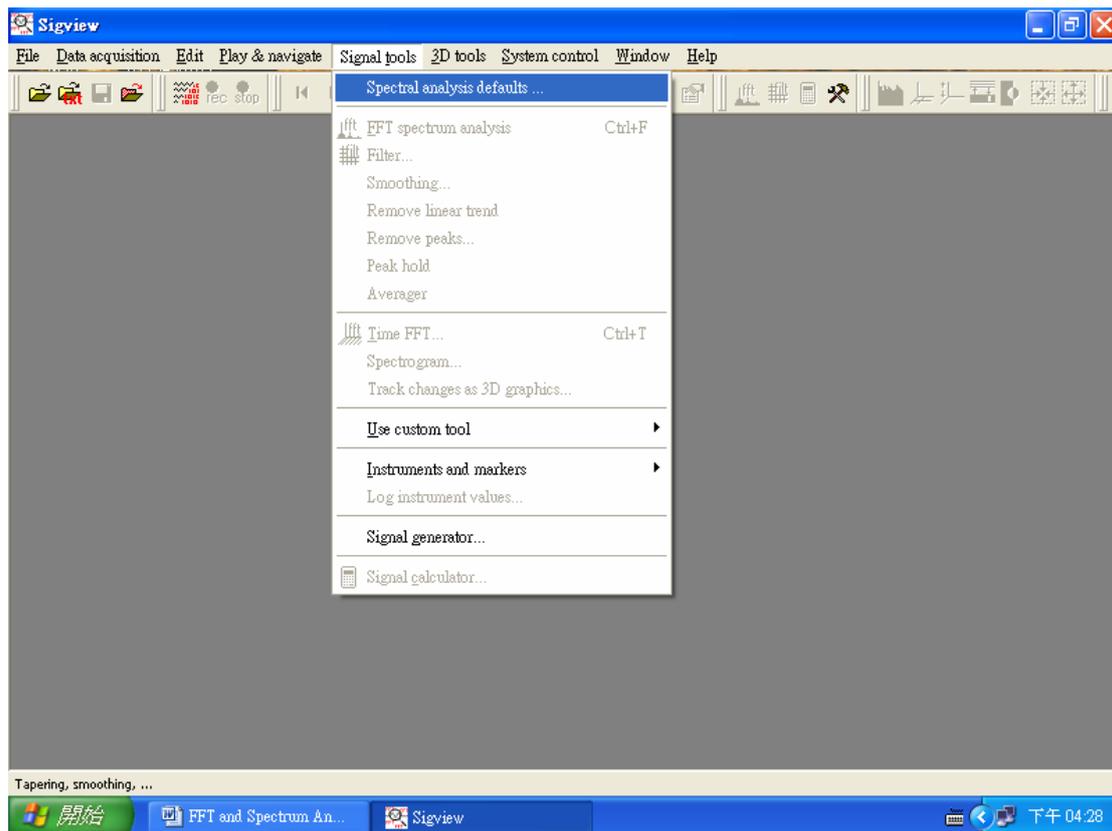


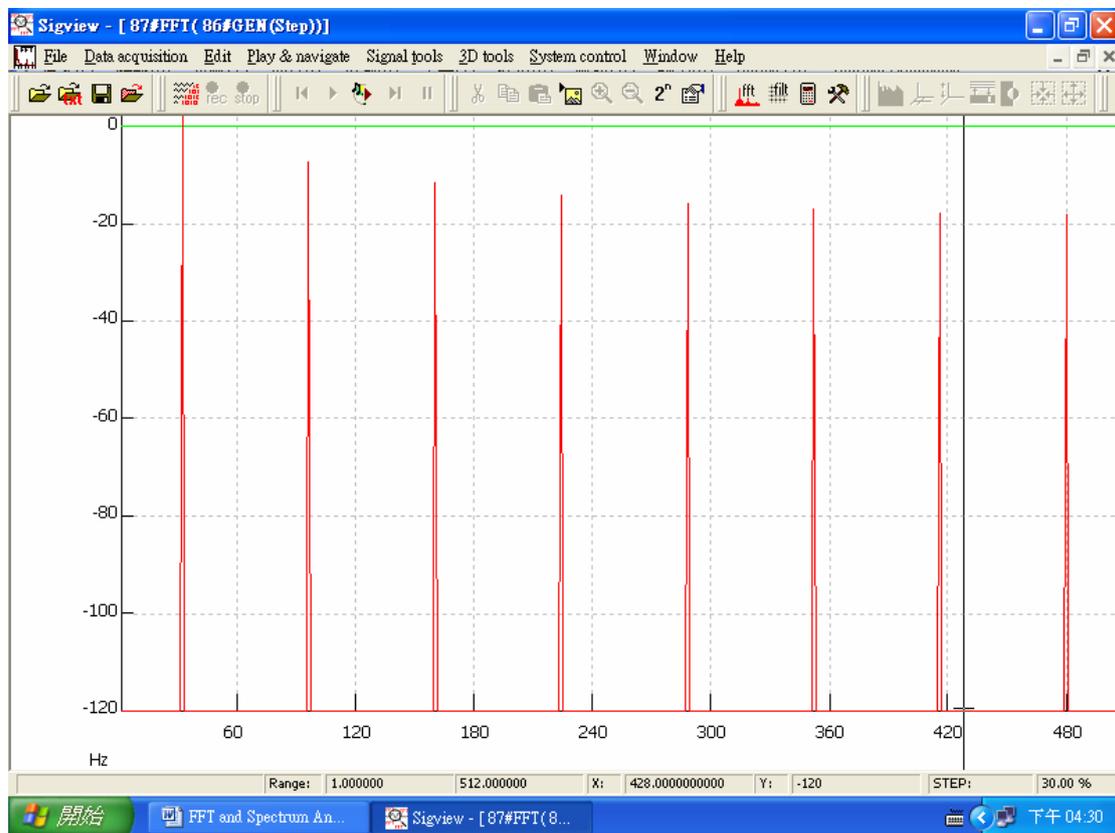
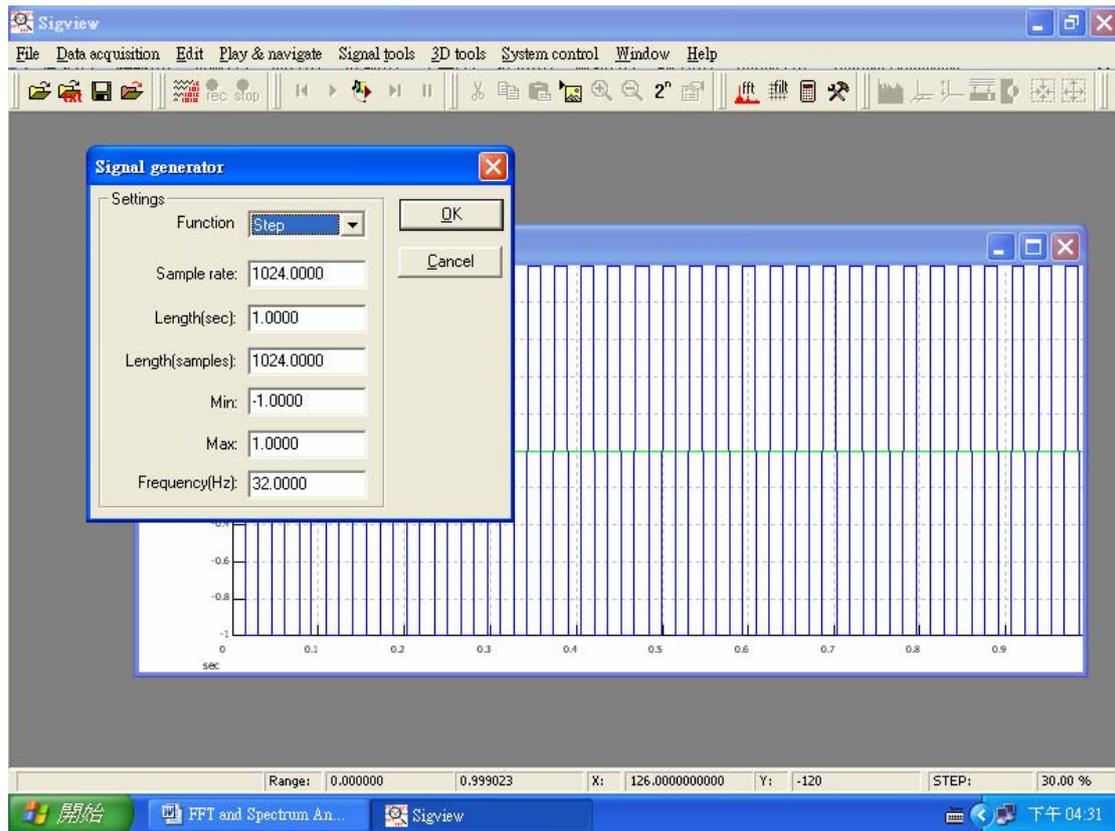


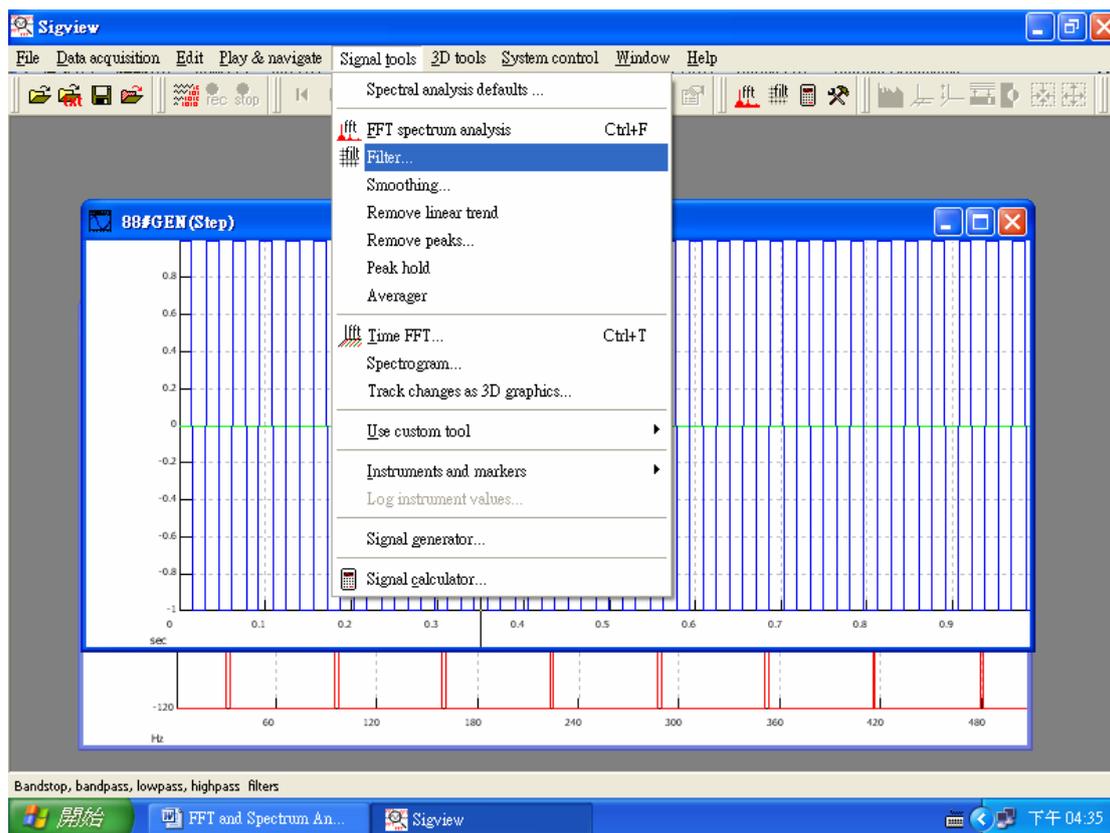












## Report:

Discuss the following limitations of the DFT from the results you obtained.

1. The signal must be band limited, and the sampling rate must be sufficiently high to avoid aliasing.
2. If it necessary to limit the length of the signal for computational purposes, the spectrum will be degraded somewhat by the leakage effect. Leakage is most severe when the simple rectangular window function is used.
3. For periodic functions, leakage can be avoided by choosing a proper data length.
4. Components lying between discrete frequency lines are subject to error in magnitude due to the "picket-fence" effect.