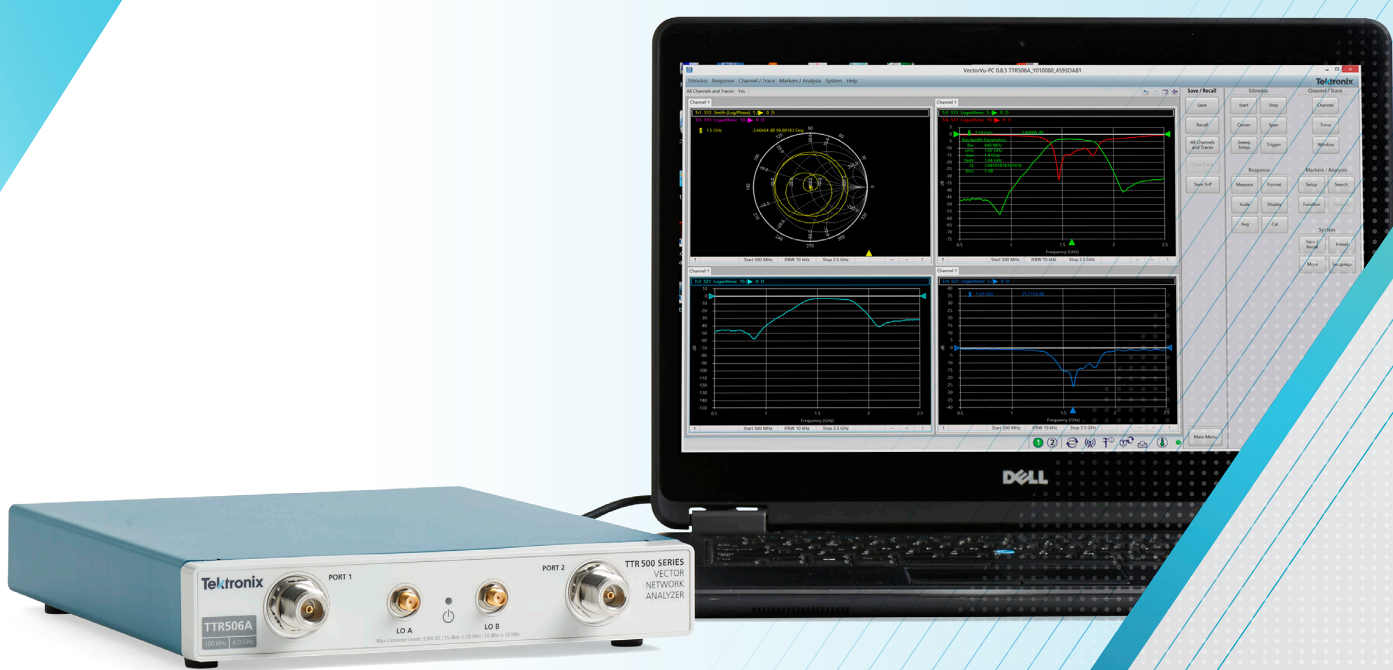
Vector Network Analyzer Fundamentals

POSTER



Tektronix®

Vector Network Analyzer Fundamentals

Types of Measurement Error

WARNING: To reduce errors that affect measurement results, it is important to calibrate a VNA setup regularly. Calibration reduces the impact of systematic and drift errors.

SYSTEMATIC ERROR

- Imperfections in the test equipment or in the test setup
- Typically predictable
- Can be easily factored out by a user calibration
- Examples that occur across the frequency range:
  - Output power variations
  - Ripples in the VNA receiver's frequency response
  - Power loss of RF cables that connect the DUT to the VNA

RANDOM ERROR

- Error caused by noise emitted from the test equipment or test setup that varies with time
- Determines the degree of accuracy that can be achieved in your measurement
- Cannot be factored out by a user calibration
- Examples include:
  - Trace noise

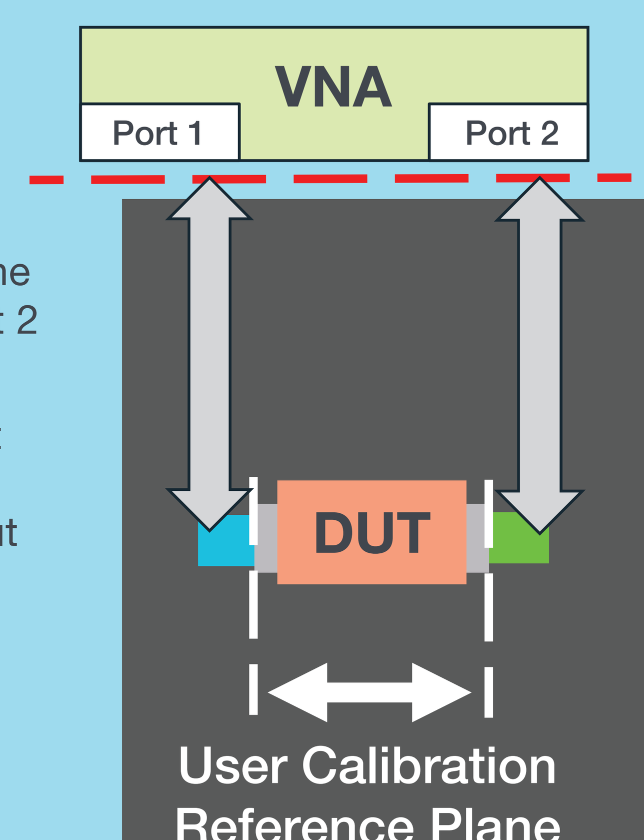
DRIFT ERROR

- Measurement drift and variances that occur over time in test equipment and test setup after a user calibration
- The amount that the test setup drifts over time determines how often your test setup needs to be recalibrated
- Examples include:
  - Temperature changes
  - Humidity changes
  - Mechanical movement of the setup

Understanding VNA Calibration

Factory Calibration

- Covers up to the Port 1 and Port 2 connectors
- Ensures output signals meet specs and input signals will be represented accurately

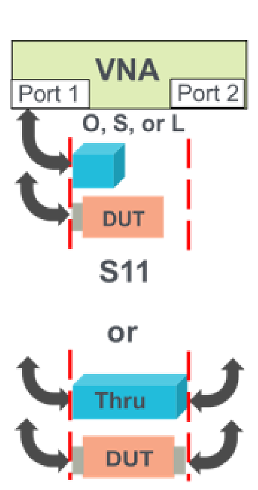


User Calibration

- Factors out the effects of cables, adaptors, and most things used in the connection of the DUT
- Allows for exact measurement of the DUT performance alone

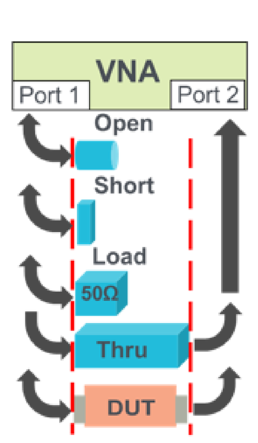
Calibration Methods

Response



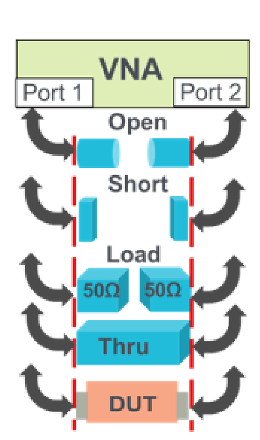
- Very simple
- Very few connections
- Less accurate
- Inexpensive

2-port One Path



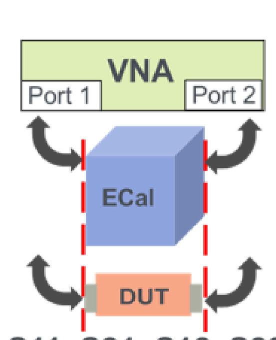
- Simple
- Few connections
- Moderately accurate
- Limited S-parameters

2-port Two Path



- Complex
- Many connections
- Highly accurate
- Full S-parameters

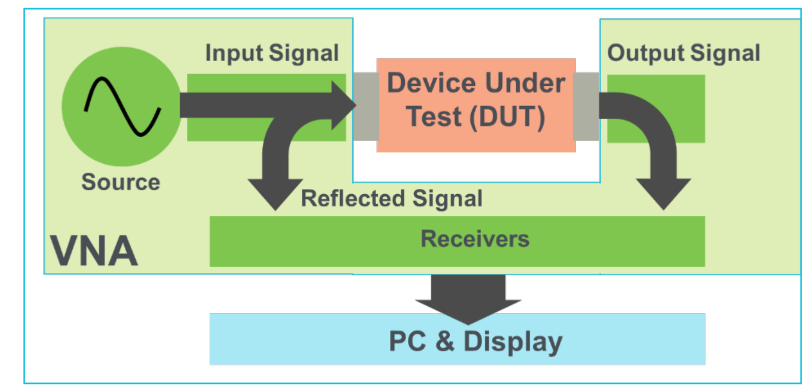
Electronic



- Very simple
- Very few connections
- Highly accurate
- Expensive

Basic VNA Operation

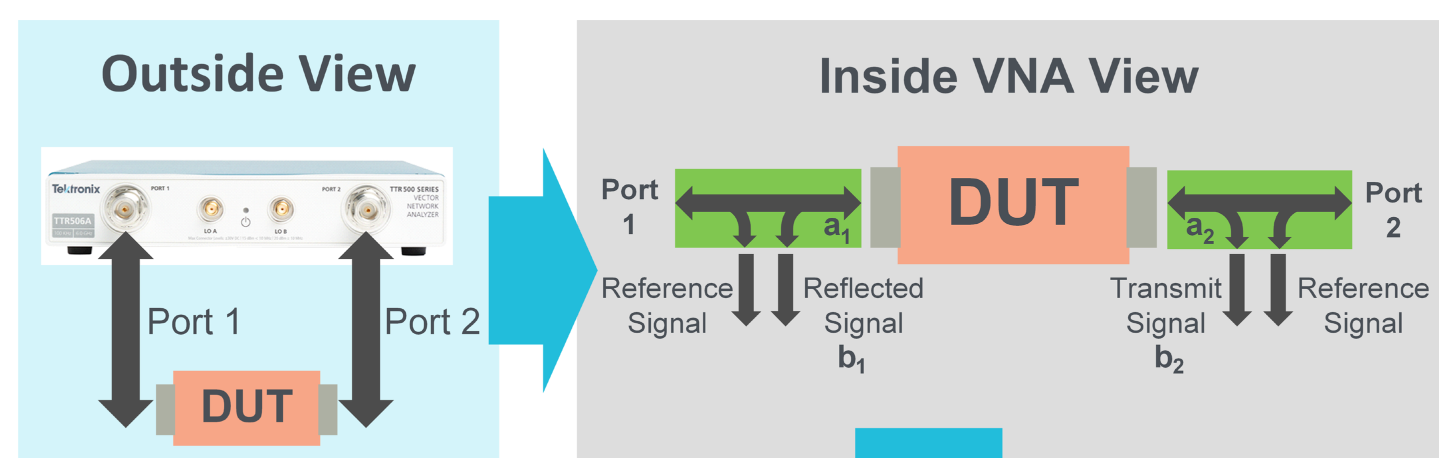
A VNA contains both a source, used to generate a known stimulus signal, and a set of receivers, used to determine changes to this stimulus caused by the device-under-test or DUT. This illustration highlights the basic operation of a VNA. For the sake of simplicity, it shows the source coming from Port 1, but most VNAs today are multipath instruments and can provide the stimulus signal to either port.

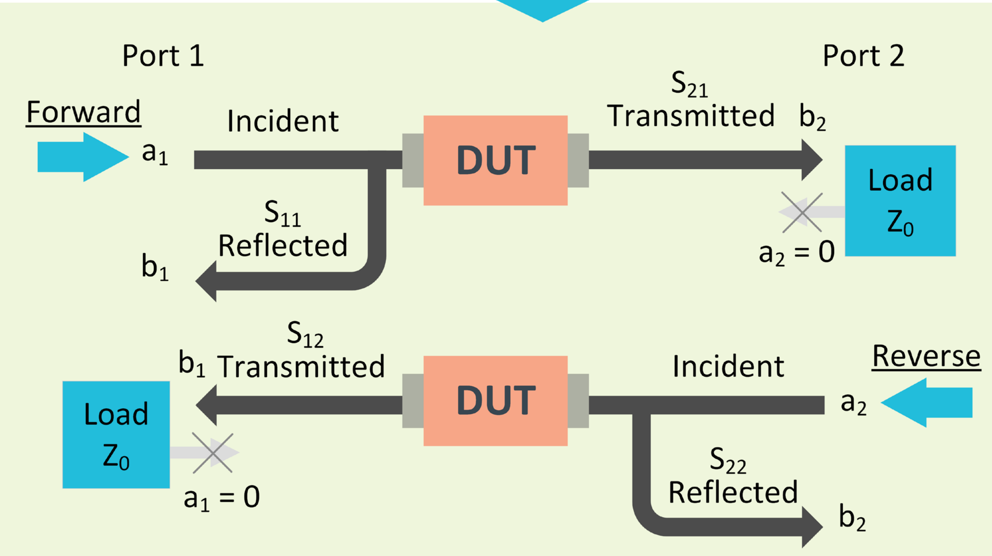


For simplicity, a single source is shown, but most VNAs today are multipath instruments and can provide the stimulus signal to either port.

S-Parameter Basics

S-Parameter Definition: Scattering parameters or S-parameters describe the electrical properties and performance of RF electrical components or networks of components when undergoing various steady state electrical signal stimuli. They are unitless complex numbers, having both magnitude and phase, and are related to familiar measurements such as gain, loss, and reflection coefficient.

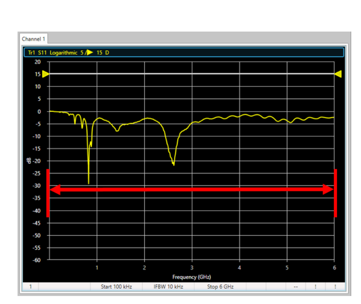




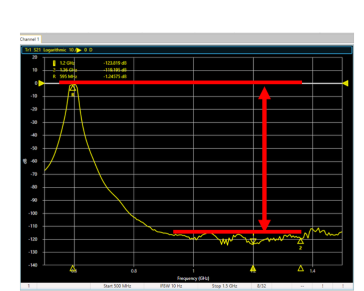
	Forward:	Reverse:
Reflection:	$S_{11} = \frac{\text{Reflected}}{\text{Incident}} = \frac{b_1}{a_1}\Big\vert_{a_2=0}$	$S_{22} = \frac{\text{Reflected}}{\text{Incident}} = \frac{b_2}{a_2}\Big\vert_{a_1=0}$
Transmission:	$S_{21} = \frac{\text{Transmitted}}{\text{Incident}} = \frac{b_2}{a_1}\Big\vert_{a_2=0}$	$S_{12} = \frac{\text{Transmitted}}{\text{Incident}} = \frac{b_1}{a_2}\Big\vert_{a_1=0}$

For more information on S-parameters go to tek.com/VNAprimer

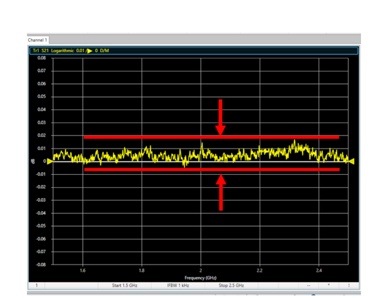
Key VNA Parameters



Frequency Range
Consider not only your immediate needs but also potential future needs.



Dynamic Range
Make sure DUT noise floor is at least 10 dB above VNA spec.



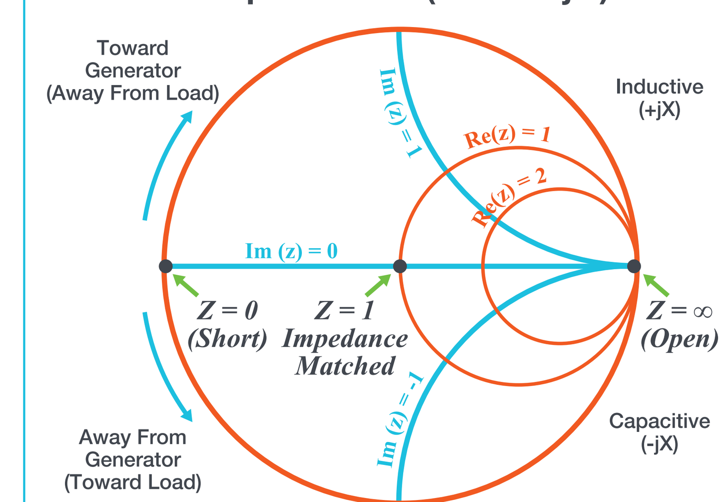
Trace Noise
Random noise generated by VNA that may affect measurement accuracy.

Measurement Speed
Critical for high volume manufacturing, less so for most other applications.

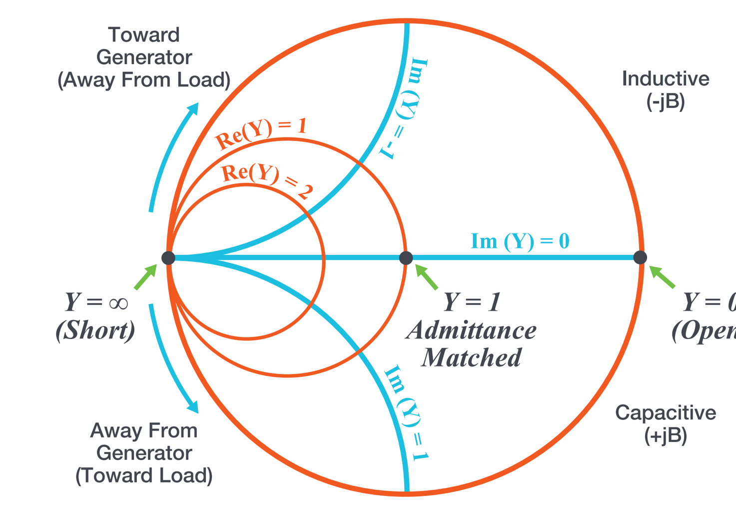
Smith Chart 101

The Smith chart is a very useful tool used to determine complex impedances and admittances of RF circuits. Most network analyzers can automatically display the Smith chart, plot measured data on it, and provide adjustable markers to show the calculated impedance.

Impedance (Z = R+jX)



Admittance (Y = G+jB)



Impedance Smith Chart

1. The circles touching the right corner are constant-resistance circles.
2. The curves stretching from the right corner to the outer edges of the impedance Smith chart are constant-reactance curves.
3. The center of the circle is the Zo point. In most cases, Zo = 50 ohms. This is also the 20-millisiemens (mS) point.

Admittance Smith Chart

1. The circles in the Smith chart that touch the left corner are constant-conductance circles.
2. The curves stretching from the left corner of the Smith chart to the outer edges of the admittance Smith chart are constant-susceptance curves.

Common S-Parameter Names

S11 — Forward reflection coefficient
- Input return loss
- Input match
- VSWR

S21 — Forward transmission coefficient
- Gain
- Loss

S12 — Reverse transmission coefficient
- Reverse isolation

S22 — Reverse reflection coefficient
- Output return loss
- Output match
- VSWR

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Contact Information:

Australia 1 800 709 465
Austria 00800 2255 4835
Balkans, Israel, South Africa and other ISE Countries +41 52 675 3777
Belgium 00800 2255 4835
Brazil +55 (11) 3759 7627
Canada 1 800 833 9200
Central East Europe / Baltics +41 52 675 3777
Central Europe / Greece +41 52 675 3777
Denmark +45 80 88 1401
Finland +41 52 675 3777
France 00800 2255 4835
Germany 00800 2255 4835
Hong Kong 400 820 5835
India 000 800 650 1835
Indonesia 007 803 601 5249
Italy 00800 2255 4835
Japan 81 (3) 6714 3010
Luxembourg +41 52 675 3777
Malaysia 1 800 22 55835
Mexico, Central/South America and Caribbean 52 (55) 56 04 50 90
Middle East, Asia, and North Africa +41 52 675 3777
The Netherlands 00800 2255 4835
New Zealand 0800 800 238
Norway 800 16098
People's Republic of China 400 820 5835
Philippines 1 800 1601 0077
Poland +41 52 675 3777
Portugal 80 08 12370
Republic of Korea +82 2 6917 5000
Russia / CIS +7 (495) 6647564
Singapore 800 6011 473
South Africa +41 52 675 3777
Spain 00800 2255 4835
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