

RFSpecTest – RF Spectral Test Executive

RFSpecTest is a software program for performing computer automated tests for RF components, using signal generators and a spectrum analyzer



- R. A. Wood Associates has developed a software program to perform computer automated RF testing using the National Instruments NI 5660
 - RFSpecTest RF Spectral Test Executive
- R. A. Wood Associates has been using the NI 5660 extensively to troubleshoot, upgrade and perform final test of RF Modules for Lockheed Martin
 - The final test data for 1 RF module contains 480 test data sheets (for gain and gain compression tests)
 - One gain test data sheet contains 21 measurements
 - One gain compression test data sheet contains ~300 measurements
 - The RFSpecTest software and the NI 5660 saved tens of thousands of dollars in test time compared to manual measurements
- Contents:
 - RFSpecTest program information
 - Example displays and printouts



General RF Test Configuration



Spectrum Analyzer



RF Test Configuration using NI PXI Equipment





Current Measurements with RFSpecTest

Tests developed:

- Gain/Insertion Loss vs. frequency
- 1 dB Gain Compression vs. frequency
- Relative Measurement vs. frequency
- Intermodulation distortion (IMD) products vs. frequency
- Test Station Calibration using RF Power Meter

• Future Tests to be added:

- Phase vs. frequency
- Adjacent channel power (ACP)
- Others as requested

All tests can be performed for various frequency plans:

- Same input/output frequency
- Down conversion with local oscillator (LO)
 - High or low side LO
- Up conversion with LO
 - High or low side LO



- Amplifiers
- RF Switches
- Mixers
- Receivers chip sets with down conversion
- Filters
- Isolators
- Fixed attenuators
- Variable attenuators
- Transmitter chip sets with up conversion
- Local oscillators
- Couplers
- Power Dividers
- Higher level RF modules and sub-systems
- Other RF and microwave components ...



Statistical Parameters

- Average
- Minimum vs. frequency
- Maximum vs. frequency
- Peak to peak (P-P) Flatness vs. frequency
- Standard deviation
- Root mean square (RMS)
- Best fit line slope vs. frequency
- Minimum deviation from best fit line
- Maximum deviation from best fit line
- P-P variation from best fit line





- RFSpecTest provides capability to store measurements to data files, and retrieve measurements from data files
- All measured data can be stored as tab-separated text data files
- Data files can be loaded and analyzed into the program for future use
- Data files can be imported into spreadsheet programs (Excel, etc)





- RFSpecTest is very close to being the first non-customized (off the shelf) RF Automated test program
- The RFSpecTest Software can easily be configured for additional signal generators and spectrum analyzers
 - New test equipment drivers would be added for additional equipment
- The core software does not change as new test equipment is added
- New test equipment would be a custom modification, but the program will be expanded to include additional drivers







- The base cost for RFSpecTest is \$1995.00
- The current software is designed to be used with the NI 5660 PXI-based spectrum/signal analyzer and Agilent 8648C signal generators
- Some additional fees may be required to add drivers for your test setup
 - Call us for quotes for other test equipment
 - We have experience with drivers for other test equipment:
 - Signal Generators (Agilent, Rohde and Schwarz, etc)
 - Spectrum Analyzers (Agilent/HP, Rohde and Schwartz, etc)
 - RF Power Meters (Agilent, Boonton, etc)

• We can also add additional measurements to the core software





- The demonstration version shows the various tests and user interfaces
- The program does not take real measurements
- The program reads data files to simulate actual measurements
 - The demonstration version should allow the user to see all the features and interfaces
- Call us to receive the full program



The RFSpecTest uses an RF power meter to calibrate signal generators, RF cabling, and the Spectrum Analyzer

- Calibration is performed at the Device Under Test (DUT) interface
 - Very accurate measurements of output power at the DUT is possible
 - Several calibration steps are built into the software:
 - Input calibration from Signal Generator 1 to the DUT input
 - Input calibration from Signal Generator 2 to the DUT input (for two tone measurements)
 - Input calibration from Signal Generator 3 to the DUT input (for Local Oscillator (LO))
 - Output calibration from the DUT output to the spectrum analyzer
 - Separate input and output calibration files allows measurements to be made through frequency conversions
 - Gain/Insertion loss accuracies comparable with network analyzers are possible (within tenths of a dB)
 - Power measurements with RFSpecTest are generally more accurate than network analyzers
 - Calibration is performed at the DUT output, RF cable losses are taken out
 - VSWR effects can be minimized by adding fixed pads at the DUT interface



- Gain vs. frequency
- Reverse isolation vs. frequency
- I dB gain compression vs. frequency
- Intercept points vs. frequency



Example Amplifier Test: Mini-Circuits ERA-5SM: Gain





_Level_Gain_Test12.vi

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		Gain Test			
Configure Test Frequencies RF START Frequency (Mhz) 1050.00 RF STOP Frequency (Mhz) 2650.00 RF STEP Size (Mhz) 50.00 RF Power Level (dBm) -10.00	Gain Plot Numeric Displays	LO Frequencies 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00	Test Time (s) Output Frequencies 1050.00 1100.00 1150.00 1250.00 1300.00 1350.00 1400.00 1500.00 1500.00 1500.00 1600.00 1600.00 1700.00	35.37 Date/Time 8/7/02 12:00 PM Gain Array 19.23 19.27 19.22 19.09 19.14 19.05 19.00 18.95 18.91 18.88 18.74 18.60 18.63 18.52	
ircuits ERA-5SM	1750.00	1000.00	1750.00 1800.00	18.52	
TAKE MEASUREMENTS SAVE DAT		omments ini-Circuit Amp ERA-5SM-TI	3 Sn- RAW002	Output File Path C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\Mini-Circuits Amps\SN RAW002 Gain Test	

Amplifier Test: Gain

X



Amplifier Test: Gain Compression





🔁 1_db_gain_comp_test15.vi

Amplifier Test: Gain Compression

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Amplifier Test: Gain Compression





Amplifier Test: Reverse Isolation





Amplifier Test: Intercept Points (dBm)



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Amplifier Test: Intermodulation Distortion (dBc)









Measurements with RFSpecTest – RF Switches

- Insertion loss vs. frequency
- On/Off isolation vs. frequency
- I dB gain compression vs. frequency
- Intercept points vs. frequency



RF Switch Example: Hittite HMC194MS8: Insertion Loss





RF Switch Example: Hittite HMC194MS8: On/Off Isolation





RF Switch Example: Hittite HMC194MS8: Off Isolation





RF Switch Example: Hittite HMC194MS8: On/Off Ratio





			Relative Mea	asurement			Test Time (s) 25.49	
Configure Test Frequencies	A Mea:	surement Plot B	Measurement Plot	Difference Plot N	umeric Displays	D	ate/Time 8/9/02 6:19 PM	<< T;
RF START Frequency (Mhz)	1							
330.00								
RF STOP Frequency (Mhz)	- A	Input Frequencies	LO Frequencies	Output Frequencie	s Gain A Array	Gain B Array	Difference Array	
2500.00	÷Ο	330.00 00	1000.00	330.00 🕤 0	-0.67	-56.50 🗇 0	-55.84	
RF STEP Size (Mhz)		430.00	1000.00	430.00	-0.67	-54.94	-54.27	
100.00		530.00	1000.00	530.00	-0.71	-52.95	-52.24	
RF Power Level (dBm)		630.00	1000.00	630.00	-0.73	-50.76	-50.03	
10.00		730.00	1000.00	730.00	-0.74	-50.41	-49.66	
		830.00	1000.00	830.00	-0.75	-49.89	-49.15	
		930.00	1000.00	930.00	-0.77	-49.35	-48.58	
		1030.00	1000.00	1030.00	-0.91	-48.23	-47.33	
OFF" Ratio		1130.00	1000.00	1130.00	-0.80	-47.52	-46.72	
		1230.00	1000.00	1230.00	-0.80	-47.29	-46.48	
		1330.00	1000.00	1330.00	0.79	-47.66	-46.87	
		1430.00	1000.00	1430.00	.0.84	46.10	-45.26	
		1520.00	1000.00	1520.00	0.74	45.71	44.97	
		1620.00	1000.00	1620.00	0.90	45.20	44.57	
		1730.00	1000.00	1730.00	0.72	44.52	42.70	
Difference Plot		1030.00	1000.00	1030.00	0.73	-44.02	-43.73	
B-A		1830.00	1000.00	1830.00	-0.77	-43.23	-42.46	
	,		Con	ments		Output File I	Path	



RF Switch Example: Hittite HMC194MS8: Intercept Points





Measurements with RFSpecTest – Mixers





Mixer Example: Anzac MD-525: Conversion Loss





Mixer Example: Anzac MD-525: Conversion Loss

		Gain Test				
Configure Test Frequencies RF START Frequency (Mhz) 1500.00 RF STOP Frequency (Mhz) 1800.00 RF STEP Size (Mhz) 25.00 RF Power Level (dBm) 10.00 Frequency Options Mixer Options Fixed LO, Stepped RF and IF Down Conversion Options I = R · L LO Frequency (Mhz) 1000.00 LO Power Level (dBm) 12.00	Gain Plot Numeric Displays Input Frequencies 1500.00 1550.00 1550.00 1550.00 1550.00 1550.00 1575.00 1600.00 1625.00 1675.00 1675.00 1775.00 1775.00 1800.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	LO Frequencies 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 1000.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	Test Time (s) 15 Output Frequencies 500.00 525.00 550.00 575.00 600.00 625.00 650.00 675.00 775.00 775.00 775.00 800.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	05 Date/Time 8/9/02 4:56 PM Gain Array -6.94 -6.97 -6.96 -7.12 -7.02 -7.07 -7.04 -7.02 -7.06 -7.01 -6.95 -6.98 -7.03 0.00 0.00 0.00	Down Co Fixed LC Stepped	Tab 2 onversio), RF and
TAKE MEASUREMENTS	Com Mixe	iments er Down Conversion	()utput File Path a C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\Mini-Circuits a Amps\AH1 Amp GAIN		



Mixer Example: Conversion Loss: Up Conversion

	Gain T	est			
Configure Test Frequencies IF START Frequency (Mhz) 500.00 IF STOP Frequency (Mhz) 800.00 IF STEP Size (Mhz) 25.00 IF Power Level (dBm) -10.00 Frequency Options Mixer - Up Conversion Mixer Options Fixed L0, Stepped RF and IF Up Conversion Options R = L + 1 L0 Frequency (Mhz) 1000.00 L0 Power Level (dBm) 12.00 L0 Power(dBm) 12.00 MD-525	Gain Plot Numeric Displays Plot of Stat Data 20.00 15.00 15.00 10.00 5.00 0.00 5.00 -5.00 -5.00 -10.00 -5.00 -10.00 -5.83 -20.00 1550.0 Marker 1 1500.00 5.00 -20.00 -15.00 -5.83 Marker 2 1500.00 5.83 4 Marker 2 1500.00 5.83 4 O -2700 Comments Mixer Up Converts	Test Time (s) 14.23 D	ate/Time 8/9/02 5:03 PM Statistics AVERAGE -6.26 MIN OF DATA -6.91 MAX OF DATA -5.82 P:P FLATNESS 1.09 RMS 6.27 STD DEV 0.35 Slope of Best Fit Line -1.05 Min Dev from BFL -0.18 Max Dev from BFL 0.26 P:P Variation from BFL 0.44 Path	Up Co Fixed Stepp	onversio



Mixer Example: Conversion Loss: Up Conversion

	Gair	n Test			
Configure Test FrequenciesLO START Frequency (Mhz)900.00LO STOP Frequency (Mhz)1200.00LO STEP Size (Mhz)25.00LO Power Level (dBm)12.00Frequency OptionsMixer - Up ConversionMixer OptionsFixed IF, Stepped RF and LOUp Conversion OptionsR = L + IIF Frequency (Mhz)650.00IF Power Level (dBm)-10.00LO Power(dBm)12.00	Gain Plot Numeric Displays Plot of Stat Data 20.00 15.00 15.00 5.00 0.00 5.00 0.00 -10.00 -10.00 -15.00 -10.00 -15.00 -1550.0 Marker 1 1550.00 Marker 2 1550.00 Start Freq Plot Vs 0 -0.00 Start Freq Plot Vs 0 -0.00 -2700 -0.00	Test Time (s) 1	4.55 Date/Time 8/9/02 5:48 PM Statistics AVERAGE -7.02 MIN OF DATA -7.28 MAX OF DATA -6.86 P-P FLATNESS 0.42 RMS 7.03 STD DEV 0.14 D 1850.0 Min Dev from BFL -0.23 Max Dev from BFL 0.16 2) -P-P Variation from BFL 0.39 -72	Up Con Fixed IF Stepped	version, ; J RF and
TAKE MEASUREMENTS SAVE D	ATA EXIT	onversion	C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\Mini-Circuits Amps\Mixer Up conversion		



Measurements with RFSpecTest – Receiver Chip Sets with Down Conversion

- Gain vs. frequency (through down conversion)
- 1 dB gain compression vs. frequency
- Intercept points vs. frequency
- Gain/attenuator adjust accuracy vs. frequency



Receiver Chip: RF 2494 High Frequency LNA/Mixer: Conversion Loss



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Receiver Chip: RF 2494 High Frequency LNA/Mixer: Conversion Loss





Measurements with RFSpecTest – Filters

Insertion loss vs. frequency

P-P ripple across the passband

Rejection vs. frequency



Filter Example 1 – Insertion Loss vs. Frequency 2.4 GHz ISM BPF





Filter Example 2 – Insertion Loss and Rejection





Measurements with RFSpecTest – Isolators

Insertion loss vs. frequency

Reverse isolation vs. frequency



Measurements with RFSpecTest – Fixed Attenuators

Insertion loss vs. frequency

Attenuation accuracy vs. frequency



- Insertion loss vs. frequency
- Attenuation accuracy vs. frequency
 - vs. attenuation setting
- I dB gain compression vs. frequency
- Intercept points vs. frequency







Variable Attenuator Example: 4 dB Measurement

Relative_Isolation_Test5.vi X File Edit Operate Tools Browse Window Help **Relative Measurement** Test Time (s) 26.47 Date/Time 8/10/02 10:06 Difference Plot Numeric Displays A Measurement Plot B Measurement Plot Configure Test Frequencies **RF START Frequency (Mhz)** Statistics B Label for Measurement B 4 dB State Meas 350.00 AVERAGE 0.00 - 1-8.64 RF STOP Frequency (Mhz) MIN OF DATA -2.00-950.00 -9.11 RF STEP Size (Mhz) -4.00-MAX OF DATA 25.00 -6.00--8.16 RF Power Level (dBm) P-P FLATNESS -8.00-Amplitude 0.00 0.96 -10.00-**BMS** -12.00-8.65 -14.00-STD DEV 0.29 -16.00--18.00-Slope of Best Fit Line -0.95 -20.00^{__1} j **RF Micro Devices RF2420** 600.0 300.0 400.0 500.0 700.0 800.0 900.0 1000.0 Min Dev from BFL Frequency Attenuator IC -0.09 ։ 🕂 🕂 Measured Max Dev from BFL Marker 1 650.00 -25.00 X Best Fit Line 0.06 + - - - --25.00 Marker 2 650.00 P-P Variation from BFL Frequency Difference B(Marker 1 - Marker 2) Stat Start Freg B 0.15 () 0 Difference Plot 0.00 🗧 B - A Amplitude Difference B(Marker 1 - Marker 2) Stat Stop Freg B (+) 2700 0.00 Output File Path Comments RUN A MEASUREMENT \boxtimes RF Micro Devices RF2420 Programmable Attenuator 8 SAVE DATA EXIT RUN B MEASUREMENT











Variable Attenuator: Intermodulation Distortion (dBc)





Measurements with RFSpecTest – Transmitter Chip Sets with Up Conversion

Gain vs. frequency (through up conversion)

- 1 dB gain compression vs. frequency
- Intercept points vs. frequency



Other Tests Available – Local Oscillators

Output Power vs. frequency

Assumes digital or analog control available



Measurements with RFSpecTest – Couplers

- Insertion loss vs. frequency
- Coupling vs. frequency
- Isolation vs. frequency
- Directivity vs. frequency



Measurements with RFSpecTest – Power Dividers

Insertion loss vs. frequency

Isolation vs. frequency

Output port matching vs. frequency







Top Level Test Panel >> RF Measurements

RF_test_set47.	vi	
<u>File Edit Operate T</u> ool:	s <u>B</u> rowse <u>W</u> indow <u>H</u> elp	
** & U		11
	RF Automated Test System (using NI 5660)	
	RF Measurements Calibration and Utilities	
	Gain Test	
	Gain Compression Test	
	Isolation, Relative Attenuation	
	IMD Test	
	Other Tests will be Added Here	
	STOP	
	Copyright 2002 by R. A. Wood Associates: All Rights Reserved.	
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Top Level Test Panel >> Calibration and Utilities

RF_test_set47.	<i>i</i> i	<u>- 🗆 ×</u>
<u>File Edit Operate Tool</u>	s <u>B</u> rowse <u>W</u> indow <u>H</u> elp	
	RF Automated Test System (using NI 5660)	
	RF Measurements Calibration and Utilities	
	Calibration	
	Set Up Test Equipment	
	Setup Power Sensor Head File	
	STOP	
	Copyright 2002 by R. A. Wood Associates: All Rights Reserved	-
•		▶ <i>[i</i> ,



Configu	ire Te	st Frequ	encies				
		Input Freque	ncies	LO Frequen	cies	Output Frequ	uencies
Frequency Options	(†) O	1000.00	() o	1000.00	0	1000.00	
Same Input/ Output Freq's		1100.00		1000.00		1100.00	
		1200.00		1000.00		1200.00	
		1300.00		1000.00		1300.00	
		1400.00		1000.00		1400.00	
BE STABT Frequency (Mhz) BE Power Lev	vel (dBm)	1500.00		1000.00		1500.00	
() 1000.00 () -10.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
RF STOP Frequency (Mhz)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
1500.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
RF STEP Size (Mhz)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
100.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	



Configure Test Frequencies: Down Conversion Example Fixed IF Frequency, Stepped RF and LO

Configur	e Te	st Freque	encies				
	~	Input Freque	ncies	LO Frequen	cies	Output Freq	uencies
Frequency Options	(†) O	1900.00	(†) o	2200.00	(†) O	300.00	
Hixer - Down Conversion	-	1950.00	-	2250.00	-	300.00	
Mixer Options		2000.00		2300.00		300.00	
Fixed IF, Stepped RF and LO		2050.00		2350.00		300.00	
Down Conversion Options		2100.00		2400.00		300.00	
DE START Fragmanau (Mina) BE Rower Leve	L(dBm)	0.00		0.00		0.00	
	rtabinij	0.00		0.00		0.00	
RF STOP Frequency (Mhz)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
2100.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
RF STEP Size (Mhz)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
50.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
IF Frequency (Mhz) LO Power Leve	l (dBm)	0.00		0.00		0.00	
3 300.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	
		0.00		0.00		0.00	



Configure Test Frequencies: Up Conversion Example Fixed LO, Stepped RF and IF

	Configure Te	st Frequencies		
Frequency Options Mixer - Up Conversion Mixer Options Fixed LO, Stepped RF and IF Up Conversion Options R = L + I IF START Frequency (Mhz) 300.00 IF STOP Frequency (Mhz) 600.00 IF STEP Size (Mhz) 50.00	F Power Level (dBm)	Input Frequencies 300.00 350.00 400.00 450.00 550.00 550.00 550.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	LO Frequencies 1200.00 1200.00 1200.00 1200.00 1200.00 1200.00 1200.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	Output Frequencies 1500.00 1550.00 1600.00 1650.00 1700.00 1750.00 1750.00 1800.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
LO Frequency (Mhz)	LO Power Level (dBm)	0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00



Calibration Panel

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<u>File E</u> dit <u>i</u>	<u>Operate</u> <u>T</u> ools <u>B</u> rowse <u>W</u> indow <u>H</u> elp	
	Calibration	
	Calibration Panel View Calibration Arrays Date/Time 4/5/02 12:16 AM	
	Power Meter Model ₩aiting #HP 436A	
	Cal Step 1 Signal Generator 1 Input Cal 10.00 View Plots of Input Cal Data	
	Cal Step 2 Signal Generator 2 Input Cal Input Cal Sig Gen 2 Power Input Cal Sig Gen 2 Power View Plots of Input Cal Data	
	Cal Step 3 Signal Generator LO Cal Input Cal Sig Gen LO Power 10.00 View Plots of LO Cal Data	
	Cal Step 4 Output Cal Output Cal Sig Gen 1 Power Frequency Tolerance (MHz) 10.00 View Plots of Output Cal Data	
	Setup Cal Frequencies View Cal Data RUN Calibration Save Calibration Data EXIT	



Calibration >> Setup Cal Frequencies

	Set Up Cali	bration Frequer	ncies			
		Input Frequency Array	Output Fi	requency Array	LO Frequency	Array
Input START Freq (MHz) LO	START Freq (MHz)	€ <u>0</u> 700.00	÷0	700.00	🗧 🗍 🗍 🗍 🗍 🗍 🗍 🗍	.00
1950.00 T1950.00 T19	STOP Free (MHz)	710.00		710.00	1960	.00
	50.00	720.00		720.00	1970	.00
Input Cal STEP Freq (MHz)	STEP Freq (MHz)	730.00		730.00	1980	.00
👌 10.00 🛛 🛛 👌 10	00	740.00		740.00	1990	.00
Output STABT Fred (MHz)		750.00		750.00	2000	.00
₹ 700.00		760.00		760.00	2010	.00
Output STOP Freq (MHz)		770.00		770.00	2020	.00
1300.00		780.00		780.00	2030	.00
Output STEP Freq (MHz)		790.00		790.00	2040	.00
0.00		800.00		800.00	2050	.00
Note: Separate calibration frequencies ca	nbe	810.00		810.00	2060	.00
used for Input Frequencies, Output Freque	ncies,	820.00		820.00	2070	.00
ana comequencies.		830.00		830.00	2080	.00
		840.00		840.00	2090	.00



Calibration >> View Calibration Data





Setup Test Equipment Panel

🔀 Set_up_test_equipment.vi					\times
<u>File Edit Operate Tools Browse Window Help</u>					
	Set Up Test Equipment				
				Date/Time 4/5/02 12:16 AM	
	Primary Signal Source for Gain, Gain Compression Tests		Measurement Source (Spectrum Analyzer)		
	Signal Generator 1 Model SG1 GPIB Address		Spectrum Analyzer Model	SA GPIB Address	
	HP 8648C		() NI 5660	18	
	Secondary Signal Source for Intermodulation Tests		Calibration Source		
	Signal Generator 2 Model SG2 GPIB Address HP 8648C 9 19		Calibration Source Model	Cal GPIB Address	
	Third Signal Source for Local Oscillator (LO)				
	Signal Generator 3 Model SG3 GPIB Address				
		Comments		Output File Path	
	LOAD SETUP SAVE SETUP EXIT			8	

Additional equipment (drivers) can be added and selected in this panel
Once the drivers are added, this menu can be used to select your test setup



Create Power Sensor Head File Panel



Used for setting up calibration factors for older RF power sensor heads





- E-mail: rawood@rawood.com
- Phone: 315-735-4217
- **•** Fax: 315-735-4328
- Address:
 - R. A. Wood Associates
 - 1001 Broad St.
 - Suite 450
 - Utica, NY 13501