

Keysight Technologies

Making Reflection Measurements

Using the N9322C Basic Spectrum Analyzer (BSA)

Application Note

Abstract

In addition to measuring the frequency power characteristics of your device or system with a spectrum analyzer, sometimes you need to evaluate the performance characteristics of antenna, RFID tags, or RF Tx modules, such as their return loss, insertion loss, and VSWR. The Keysight Technologies, Inc. N9322C basic spectrum analyzer (BSA) supports those additional measurements through the use of an optional tracking generator (Option TG7) and reflection measurement (Option RM7). The built-in bridge in the tracking generator makes the N9322C an easy-to-use reflection analyzer.

Introduction to Reflection Measurement

A scalar reflection measurement evaluates how efficiently energy is transferred into a device and reveals the degree of mismatch between a device and a Z0 transmission line (Z0 = characteristic impedance, typically 50 Ω). Not all the energy incident upon a device can be absorbed by the device, and a portion of the energy is reflected back toward the source. We can determine the efficiency of energy transfer by comparing the incident and reflected signals. See Figure 1.

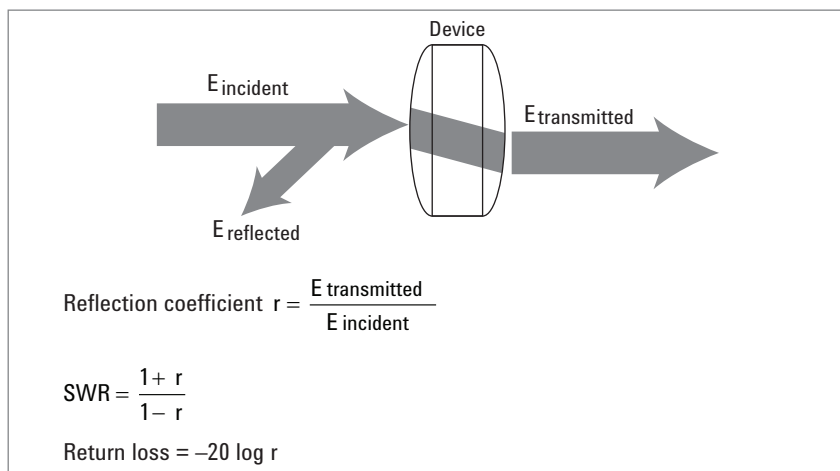


Figure 1. Reflection measurements

The Benefits of Using the N9322C BSA for Reflection Measurement

The N9322C BSA is a dual-use spectrum analyzer. You can easily set it up to cover reflection measurements by adding Option TG7 and Option RM7. The benefits of using this solution include:

1. Simple test setup

The built-in VSWR bridge on the tracking generator makes the connection straightforward, and eliminates the need for an external bridge (Refer to Figures 2 and 3).

2. Excellent reliability and repeatability

The simple test setup reduces potential measurement error from the cable.

3. Superior reflection measurement accuracy

The N9322C BSA reflection measurement mode uses an open-short-load (OSL) calibration procedure, which eliminates system errors better than others that use a single calibration (open or short) procedure.

4. Simple operation

Once the OSL calibration is finished, the N9322C BSA is in vector network analyzer mode, therefore, you only need to control the frequency range of interest. The N9322C BSA allows you to read both return loss and VSWR.

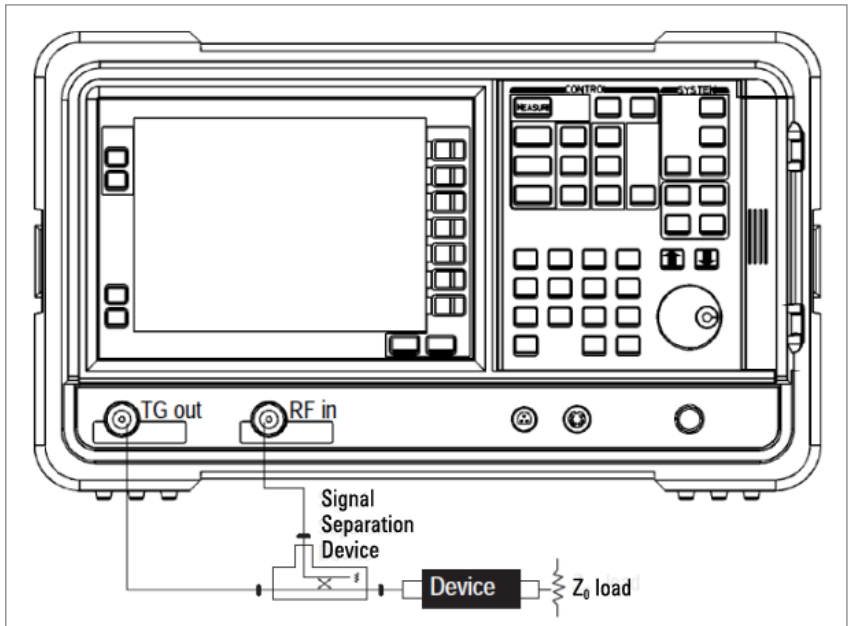


Figure 2. Conventional test setup requires an external bridge

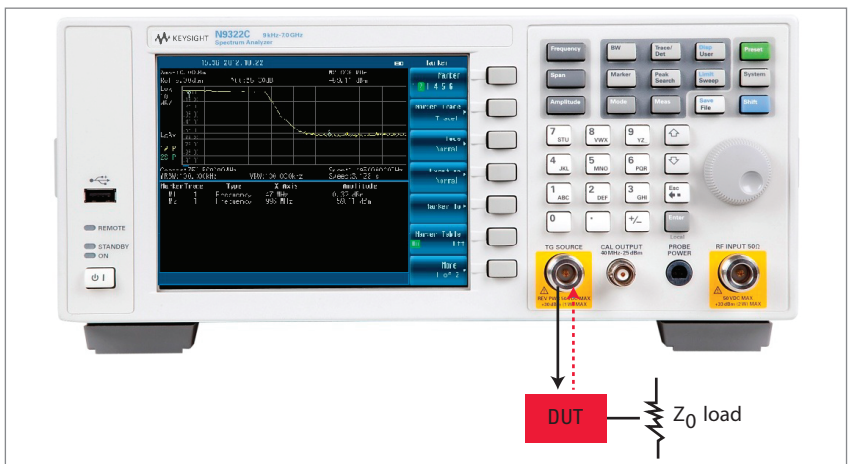


Figure 3. Simple test setup with N9322C BSA

Key Specifications of the N9322C Tracking Generator and Reflection Measurement Options

N9322C tracking generator (Option TG7)

- Frequency
 - Range: 5 MHz to 7 GHz
 - Resolution: 1 Hz
 - Resolution bandwidth (RBW): 3 kHz to 3 MHz
- Output power
 - Range: –20 to 0 dBm
 - Resolution: 1 dB
- Measurement dynamic range
 - Max. output power: – DANL with 3 kHz RBW



Figure 4. N9311X-201, OSL precision mechanic Calibrator

3-in-1 OSL precision mechanic calibrator (N9311X-201, refer to Figure 4)

- Option RM7
- Frequency range: DC to 7 GHz
- Port: Open, short, and load
- Directivity: > 40 dB

N9322C reflection measurement (Option RM7)

- Frequency
 - Range: 5 MHz to 7 GHz
 - Resolution: 100 kHz
- Output power
 - –4 to +2 dBm (nominal)
- Trace point: 461
- Return loss
 - Range: 0 to 60 dB
 - Resolution: 0.01 dB
 - Accuracy ¹: $20\log_{10} \left(1.1 + 10^{\left(\frac{-D-RL}{20}\right)} + 0.016 \times 10^{\frac{-RL}{20}} + 10^{\left(-3 + \frac{RL}{20}\right)} \right)$ (nominal)
- VSWR
 - Range: 1 to 65
 - Resolution: 0.01

1. "D" refers to the directivity of the calibrator; "RL" refers to return loss

Making a reflection measurement with the N9322C BSA

Three-step guide to make an accurate reflection measurement:

1. Set up the spectrum analyzer's control settings (mode, frequency, RBW, sweep time, etc)
2. Calibrate the N9322C BSA with the Keysight N9311x-201 OSL calibrator in order to eliminate system error and temperature drift errors
3. Re-connect the DUT and read the measurement result from the analyzer

Example: Measuring the return loss and VSWR of an antenna

In this example, the DUT is a Yagi antenna with frequency coverage from 824 to 960 MHz. The demonstration procedures use text in [] to indicate a hardkey and { } to indicate a softkey on the N9322C spectrum analyzer.

Step 1. Set up the N9322C BSA

Press [Mode] > {Reflection Measurement} to enter the reflection measurement mode of the N9322C BSA

- Press [Frequency] > {Start Freq} > [824] > {MHz} to set the start frequency at 824 MHz
- Press [Frequency] > {Stop Freq} > [960] > {MHz} to set the stop frequency at 960 MHz
- Toggle {Cal Type} to {Selected} for higher calibration accuracy, comparing to Full band calibration

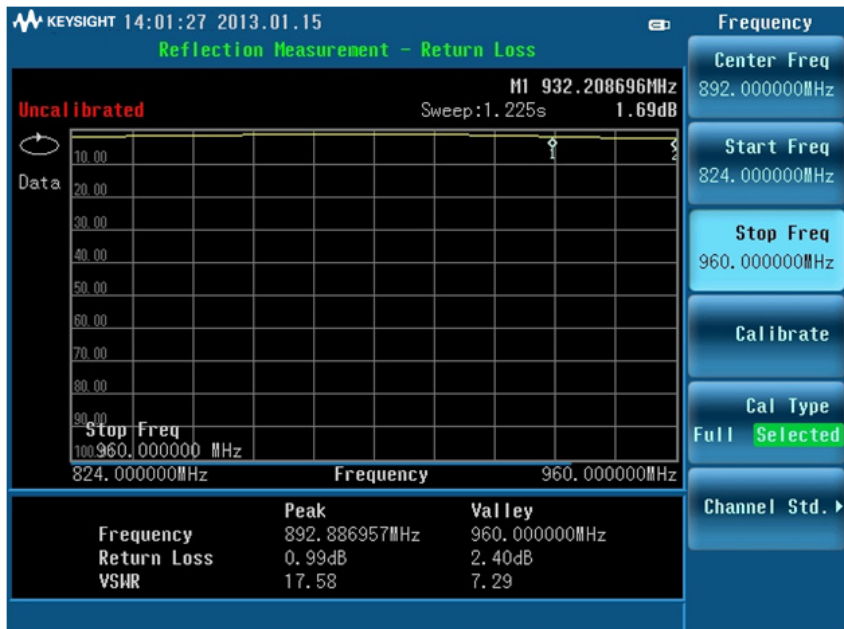


Figure 5. Reflection measurement mode waiting for OSL calibration

Step 2. Calibrate the N9322C BSA with the OSL calibrator

- Press {Calibrate} to initiate the open-short-load calibration procedure
- Follow the instrument instructions and connect the open, short, and load port of the calibrator to the TG output port of the N9322C BSA
- Once finished, the instrument displays “Calibrated” on the left upper corner of the display

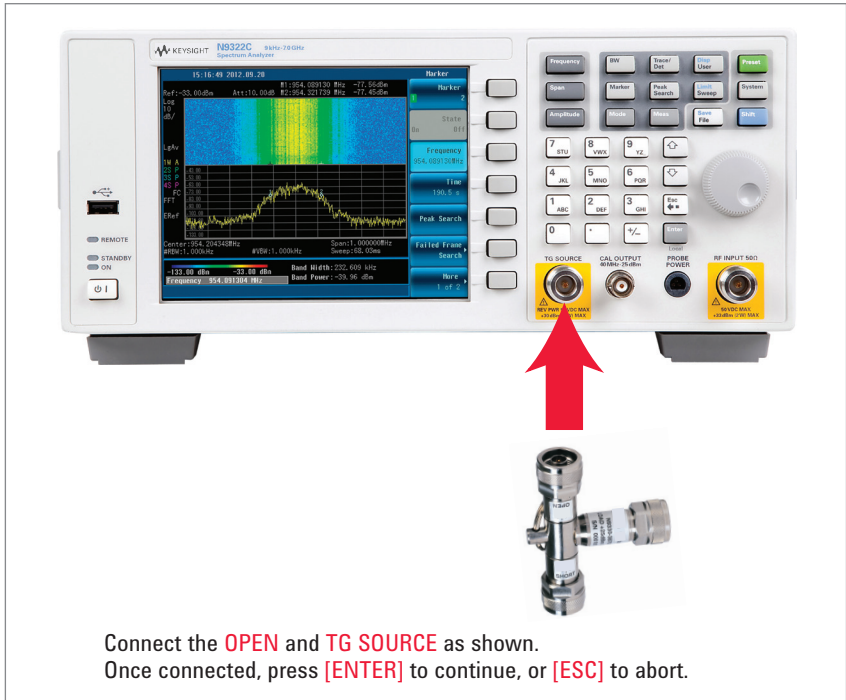


Figure 6. Performing open-short-load calibration on the N9322C BSA

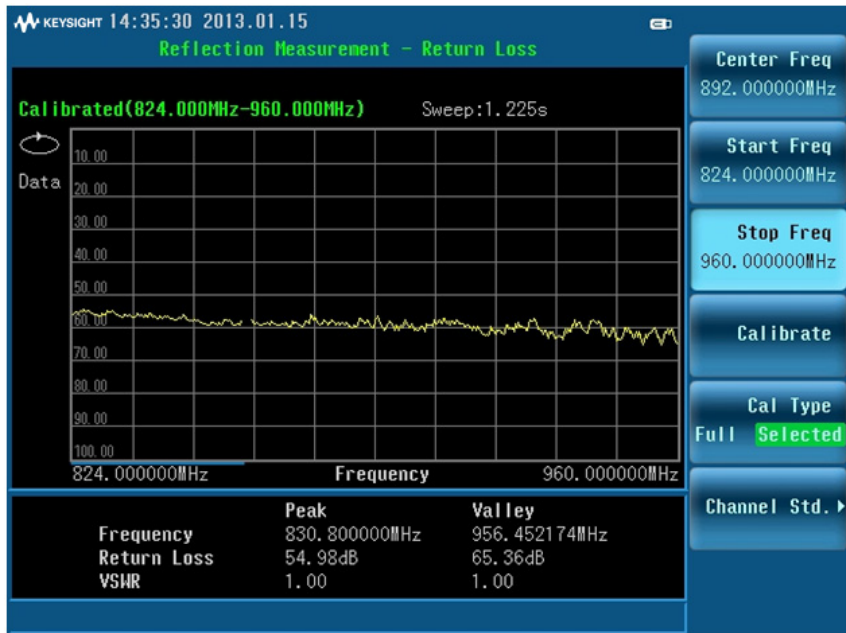


Figure 7. The calibrated N9322C BSA ready for measuring return loss/VSWR

Step 3. Connect DUT to the N9322C for reflection measurement

- Disconnect the calibrator from the TG output port of the N9322C
- Connect the DUT to the TG output
- Press [Amplitude] > {Auto Scale} to optimize the amplitude scale automatically
- Press [Marker] to turn on the markers to read the points of interest for the frequency, return loss, and VSWR parameters

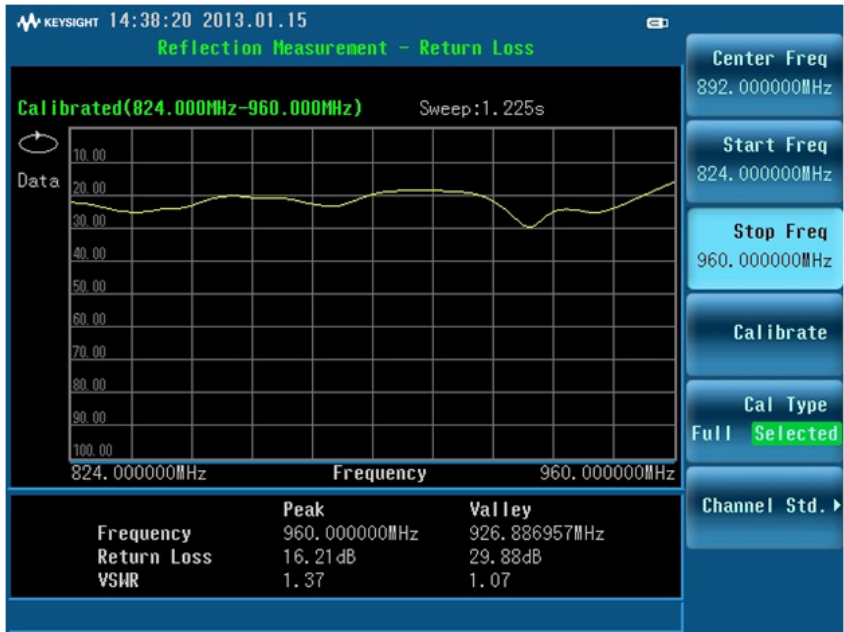


Figure 8. A calibrated return loss measurement across the selected frequency range

Summary

The tracking generator with its built-in VSWR bridge makes the N9322C basic spectrum analyzer (BSA) an efficient, reliable, and cost-effective solutions for RF engineers who need to measure both frequency power characteristics and stimulus-response performance of their devices.

Ordering Information

Pub number	Description
N9322C	Basic spectrum analyzer, 9 kHz to 7 GHz
N9322C-TG7	Tracking generator, 5 MHz to 7 GHz
N9322C-RM7	Reflection measurement
N9311X-201	3-in-1 precision mechanic calibrator

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