RF Test Systems R&S TS8950 G / TS8955 G

Reliable RF testing of GSM, GPRS and EDGE mobile phones

Since the very beginning of GSM mobile radio, Rohde & Schwarz systems have been the de facto standard for conformance testing. Continuous extensions to the standard, additional frequency bands and shorter design phases pose new and higher demands to which Rohde & Schwarz responds with the RF Test Systems R&S TS8950 G / TS8955 G. They support all GSM850 / 900 / 1800 / 1900 frequency bands in the circuit switched, GPRS and EGPRS connection modes and are easily upgraded to WCDMA.

GSM – a mature standard with a future

GSM is far from being outdated, even though 3GPP WCDMA is set to be launched. Significant advantages of GSM are the stability it has achieved through years on the air and its worldwide acceptance.

Nor is GSM negligible in WCDMA networks. For fast network coverage and roaming functionality, most WCDMA mobiles will also support GSM. As a consequence, test systems for new GSM features must be easily upgradable to WCDMA.

Scarcely is GPRS on the market, before the next development, EGPRS, appears on the horizon. EGPRS is intended to achieve data rates up to 364 kbit/s, thus also covering typical 3G applications. With a view to fast data transmission, network operators in North America in particular have shifted their focus from TDMA IS136 to GSM in recent months, and so given extra impetus to the GSM850 and EGPRS frequency modes.
There is consequently an enormous test requirement for the GSM850 and EGPRS innovations. However, no test platform currently on the market consistently supports the new frequency band for GSM850, i.e. with the same validated hardware. Nor can these systems use the 8PSK modulation format for EGPRS.

An exception is approaching with the new test system family from Rohde & Schwarz. It supports all GSM 850 / 900 / 1800 / 1900 frequency bands in the circuit switched, GPRS and EGPRS connection modes. And it is easily upgraded to a GSM/WCDMA test system.

From development tester to conformance test system

The new modular RF test system family provides for the first time consistent measurements over the entire development cycle of a mobile phone.

The R&S TS8955G is a modular development and precompliance RF test solution. The spectrum starts with test sets with two devices, e.g. a combination of the GSM Protocol Analyzer R&S CRTU-G [1] and Baseband Fading Simulator R&S ABFS [2], or the Universal Radio Communication Tester R&S CMU200 [3] with the high-end Spectrum Analyzer R&S FSU8 [4].

Conformance testing to GCF* is the hallmark of mobile phones. The RF Conformance Test System R&S TS 8950 G covers all necessary RF measurements. Validation of the R&S TS8950 G confirms its compliance with the measurement accuracy required in 3GPP specifications and is proof of the quality of the test system.

The test systems of the family are based on the same hardware and software; the R&S TS8955G is therefore fully upgradable to an R&S TS 8950 G (FIG 2). This ensures optimum consistency of the measurement results.

This Rohde & Schwarz instrumentation is already in use in development labs all over the world. Besides the equipment mentioned above, the proven Vector Signal Generator R&S SMIQ03 B [5] and the Microwave Signal Generator R&S SMP 22 are supported.

The high-convenience R&S PASS** software for the entire test system family sets up on these functionalities. A system thus grows with the individual devices, and new functions are fast available. The software allows speedy generation and automation of development tests without time-consuming programming effort.

Possibilities beyond GCF test cases

The systems offer extra and wide-ranging possibilities beyond the official GCF test cases. Under R&S PASS software, all test cases set up on just a few test sets.

* GCF: Global Certification Forum, an initiative of the GSM Association, manufacturers of terminals, test houses and T&M manufacturers for the standardization of mobile telephone test requirements.

** R&S PASS: parametric application software for test systems.
methods (FIG 3). All GSM RF tests for phase 2, GPRS and EDGE in all current and future frequency bands are implemented by only six of them. Receiver tests, for example, are covered by one test method with some 50 parameters. Parameter sets are used to define the test cases, from the levels of useful signals and interference signals through channels and fading settings to the number of measured samples. These parameter sets can be modified, expanded or completely redefined at any time on a user-friendly interface.

That means you can instantly and accurately get to the root of problems occurring during the development of mobile phones. In addition, completely new test cases can be created without any programming effort, e.g. for customer-specific test scenarios (FIG 4).

Automatic path calibration in the R&S TS8950G ensures optimum measurement accuracy even in extreme test situations. The complexity of the test sequence thus recedes into the background and the user can fully focus on the actual measurement.

Analysis – online and offline

The user interface of R&S PASS runs as a separate process, independently of the test application. During a test run it is therefore possible to compose the next test sequence for example, analyze earlier test results or define new tests, without interfering with the ongoing test.

With R&S PASS, test results can also be stored outside of the test system in a corporate network. A copy of the analyzer tool allows analysis of results anywhere and at any time (FIG 5).
R&S TS8955G – a system with many facets

The R&S TS8955G system for development and precompliance testing can be configured to customer specifications. Depending on the application, configurations for receiver tests, transmitter tests or both can be created. Together with the customer, Rohde & Schwarz defines the hardware and software for the required test application and thus finds the matching solution. This entry-level configuration is not a one-way street, however, as subsequent upgrading is quite straightforward.

All devices can be logged on and off through the user interface, so configurations can also be modified for the short term. The use of LabWindows CVI™ as a programming environment enables simple integration of customer-specific apparatus, e.g. climatic chambers.

R&S TS8950G – oriented on future WCDMA

The fact that the R&S TS8950W – an RF test system for WCDMA FDD – is based on the R&S TS8950G platform demonstrates the emphasis that Rohde & Schwarz places on modularity and secure solutions for the future. The TS8950G and all system variants of the TS8955G can be upgraded to WCDMA without exchanging hardware.

Summary

The new test system family from Rohde & Schwarz is a well-rounded solution for the entire development cycle of mobile terminals. The R&S PASS software and the test method concept provide an unprecedented degree of flexibility. They do away with time-consuming programming so that the user can fully focus on the actual measurement application.

More information and data sheets at www.rohde-schwarz.com (search term: equipment name)

REFERENCES

Platform for RF tests according to 3GPP TS51.010-1
- Freely configurable RF test methods for R&D
- Supports GSM Ph2/Ph2+, GPRS, and EDGE
- Upgradable to WCDMA
- Open interfaces for easy integration into individual lab concept
- Control of custom equipment
- Full remote access
- Online measurement accuracy control

RF Test System TS8950G for GSM/GPRS/EDGE Mobiles
Reliable RF testing all the way from development to conformance testing

Data sheet TS8950G

The platform concept reduces time to familiarize and offers consistent test results, considerably shortening the development phase for mobile phones.

Alexander Pabst

News from Rohde & Schwarz Number 174 (2002/II)