

CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF ULTRASONIC METERS

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Introduction

There are many in our industry who would consider the advancement of the ultrasonic meter to be one of the most important improvements in gas measurement in the past twenty years. It is my opinion that the immense improvement in gas measurement is not so much the ultrasonic meter itself. Instead, I believe it is the meter's ability to detect conditions that would compromise its own accuracy and ability to communicate those conditions to the user. It is in the area of communicating those conditions, that we often under-utilize the meters capabilities.

The natural gas pipeline industry has seen tremendous changes in the past twenty years, including a smaller multi- skilled workforce. The reality of today's pipeline workforce is fewer technicians performing a wider range of tasks. Much of their measurement work is performed with less frequency, and on more complex equipment than ever before. Gaining the proficiency needed to recognize and troubleshoot ultrasonic meter problems, requires time and experience to learn. By bringing the meter's diagnostic data into our SCADA system, we can provide alarms and trending capabilities that are not dependent on the frequency at which a Technician can visit a measurement facility. Furthermore, it is not dependent on whether a Technician has the necessary expertise to recognize potential meter problems.

Another change our industry has seen are meter stations with larger but fewer meters. With the high turn down capabilities of ultrasonic meters, large volume meter stations that before would have been built with four or more orifice meters are now built with one or two larger ultrasonic meters. Fewer meters, means we are placing a higher liability on each meter.

One factor that has not changed is the expectations of a tight pipeline balance. In fact, most of us have seen our lost and unaccounted for objectives reduced to a level that would have been impossible to meet twenty years ago. Fortunately, our ultrasonic meters have less uncertainty than the meters we used in the past, and provide us with enough data to warn us when their accuracy is in question. Unfortunately, our testing practices are not much different than the way we've tested orifice meters twenty five years ago. When testing orifice meters, we made sure the plate was clean, flat, and sharp; then the transmitters were calibrated. Similarly, with our ultrasonic meters, we look at the software display, pull a two minute log file, calibrate the transmitters, and then assume all is well until the next test cycle. You can be quite confident that the old sayings "ignorance is bliss" and "what you don't know can't hurt you" do not apply when searching your pipeline system for lost gas.

Much like our industry's movement from chart recorders to Electronic Flow Measurement some 30 years ago, the development of Smart Measurement Diagnostic Systems is the natural progression of this technology. This is being accomplished by building on the previous developments of EFMs, PLCs and smart meters.

Benefits of Continuous Data Gathering

While today's ultrasonic meters provide tremendous amounts of diagnostic data, if that data is only reviewed once a month or less, we may still find ourselves months behind the curve when we begin looking for measurement problems. In order to make measurement corrections, we end up spending countless hours combing massive amounts of data pulled from the meter. Historical data may not be available in many older ultrasonic meters, making it even more difficult to determine when the meter's problems began.

Think about the benefits that can be derived from polling for this data even once every five seconds. Instead of having a two minute snap shot of the meters health each month, you will have over half a million snap shots of that data every month. By utilizing our flow computers and SCADA systems to gather and analyze this data, we can monitor our ultrasonic meters continuously, making the data readily available to Technicians, Data Analysts, and Gas Controllers.

Meter Alarm Monitoring via SCADA

Storing this data in your SCADA system can provide you with instantaneous and predictive methods of monitoring. Utilizing discrete type alarms and base line data for limits provides instantaneous alarms that can be identified by inexperienced users. These alarms provide Gas Controllers or Analysts, who may have no ultrasonic meter training the ability to identify potential meter problems, and have the confidence necessary to call the problem to the technician's attention.

Trending of this diagnostic data provides a detailed history that can be used to reveal shifts over time. This data can be utilized to uncover a variety of subtle changes in a meter that would be difficult to detect viewing maintenance logs once a month. Historical data can be used to tighten alarm limits as well. Detailed analysis of this data would require examination by someone with ultrasonic meter experience, but with the data stored in the SCADA system, it would be readily available to employees that are trained to perform such tasks.

We have found that SCADA monitoring of this data not only provides us with instant and predictive monitoring of our meters, it also provides a means of monitoring our meters at stations that do not flow on a routine basis. Additionally, it provides the ability to monitor for intermittent problems.

Ultrasonic meters at peaking power plants can be difficult to monitor, because they tend to run at unscheduled times throughout their generating season. Technicians may often find it difficult, especially during shoulder months, to catch these stations when they're flowing to perform meter tests. SCADA monitoring of ultrasonic meters not only provides warnings of possible measurement inaccuracies for these meters, it could also provide support for extending meter test frequencies on meters that flow continuously.

As we all know, intermittent problems with any equipment can be difficult to find. Prior to our polling one particular 12-inch ultrasonic meter with our flow computer, we found a bolt sleeve from an insulating gasket lying up against the flow conditioner. We caught this by chance when our Technician noticed an unusual profile factor during a meter test. Apparently, the sleeve would lie on the bottom of the pipe until the velocity increased to a point high enough to stand it up, which was the only time it created a profile disturbance. Since there was a strainer upstream of the meter, one can only assume the sleeve had been in there since the station was built. That being the case, it took nearly 5 years for someone to be there at the right time to catch it. Imagine trying to monitor your pipeline for H₂O or H₂S by performing a dragger tube test once a month to check for slugs coming through your pipeline. Collecting two minute logs every month would give you about the same odds of discovering an intermittent problem with the meter.

Getting Started

The basic concept behind continuous monitoring of ultrasonic meters is to utilize the Modbus communications capabilities of the flow computer and meter to transfer data between the two devices. This data can then be used to execute the same or similar diagnostics performed by the meter's software or a Technician reviewing a maintenance log. The diagnostic data in the flow computer can then be polled by a SCADA system which makes the data available offsite. The process of polling ultrasonic meters for data has been an ongoing process for us since 2004. New meters, the availability of new data, and new calculation capabilities, such as the ability to calculate the speed of sound in the flow computer, have required us to make changes to the way data is processed and retrieved for analysis. For the most part, future changes to polling routines and calculated data can be avoided or at least reduced with proper planning.

With that in mind, you need to start by asking yourself a few questions. What data do you want to see? Do you want to poll for all the data, or do you want to poll for some of the data, and calculate some of the meter health alarms? Do you want to pull the raw data into your flow computer and perform the diagnostics there, or simply pass the data on and perform the diagnostics in your SCADA system?

There is far more data available in most ultrasonic meters than you likely want to collect. The first step is to list the meter health conditions you want to monitor. Once you have created that list, you will then need to determine the Modbus registers that contain those particular meter health alarms, or the data you will need to calculate those alarms. The Modbus register documentation is available from the manufacturer, and is listed in the Modbus references at the end of this paper.

At this point, you'll find, depending on the type of meter, whether you can simply poll for all the meter health data wanted, or if you will have to poll for some of the data, and use that data to calculate the meter health alarms. Depending on the meter manufacturer, you may find it simpler to calculate some of the alarms rather than make multiple polls to gather all the meter health data. Calculations of meter health alarms can be performed in the flow computer or a SCADA system. This

would depend on the flow computer, and the SCADA system’s capabilities, as well as the availability of someone to program these calculations into the system.

We opted to do a combination of polling for some of the meter health alarm, and to calculate some of them. We chose this method primarily because of the number of older ultrasonic meters we own that do not have all the meter health data we wanted assigned to Modbus registers.

Depending on the meter type, we are polling for all or some of the following data: corrected flow rate, uncorrected flow rate, average velocity, average speed of sound, as well as velocities and speed of sound for each path. We are also polling for turbulence, swirl, path performance, cross flow, AGC levels, signal to noise ratios and path status. We use the path level velocities and speed of sound data to calculate the profile factor, symmetry, and path speed of sound spread. We then perform several calculations and comparisons to provide various alarm points using the original flow calibration data as a baseline for alarm parameters.

As stated in the previous paragraph, one of the pieces of data we want from the meter is the corrected flow rate. To accomplish this requires that we provide the meter with the necessary data for it to perform the appropriate calculations. Depending on the manufacturer, pressure, temperature, and gas quality values can be given to the meter several ways. The pressure and temperature values can be sent to some meters through an analog input. As well some meters can be up to poll an onsite GC. Pressure, temperature, gas quality and/or compressibility can all be written to the meter through the same Modbus connection used to read data from the meter. Some meters require writing the data to provide a continuous update of these values. We have meters set up both ways, but we typically write the data to the meters, because we do not have an onsite chromatograph at many of our ultrasonic stations. In this case, the gas quality being used by the flow computer for calculations is written to the meter.

To set up a meter poll in our flow computer, the Technician would select the meter type from a drop down menu, which is illustrated in figure 1. The meter type signal tells the flow computer how to configure the master port used to poll the meter. We also utilized the different meter default protocols and communication settings to minimize meter set up changes.

The port configuration set by the meter type signal dictates the appropriate floating point format, bit, byte, word orders, start register, and the number of registers to poll. Additionally, the Modbus data will be in metric units for some meters and imperial units for others. The meter type signal tells the flow computer to convert the incoming data when necessary.

The polled data is then mapped to different signals and is used for the various calculations we want to perform. This allows us to utilize the same flow computer program whether the meter station has Instromet, Daniel, or Sick Maihak meters. The fewer types of meters you have will help simplify the process.

Modbus Parameters		Port Settings	
Name	Value	Name	Value
Enable	Enabled	Serial Com Address	1
Floating Point Type	32 Bit FP,2 Reg	IP Address	192.168.1.15
Bit Order	High Bit First	Poll Type	Sick Maihak Ultrasonic Meter
Byte Order	High Byte First	View Poll	Custom Poll
Word Order	High Word First		Daniel Ultrasonic Meter
Start Register	7001		Sick Maihak Ultrasonic Meter
Num of Registers	20		Instromet 3 Path Ultrasonic Meter
Poll Function	3		Instromet 5 Path Ultrasonic Meter
Poll Delay Time	10.00	Micro Motion Coriolis Meter	Function Execution Successful
IP Poll Enable	Enabled	Change Parameters	Submit Changes
Port	0		

Figure 1, Meter Polling Setup Screen “Self-Diagnostic” Alarming

Originally, we used the data polled to calculate a profile factor, symmetry, speed of sound spread, and to compare the meter's speed of sound to one we calculated in the flow computer. This data is displayed in the RTU and shown in figure 7. In recent years, we explored the benefits of gathering additional data from our meters. We worked with Sick Maihak and Daniel Industries to establish some additional diagnostic logic in our flow computers for their meters. With our Daniel meters, we used the methodology described in a paper written by Dan Hackett titled "Advanced Diagnostics Firmware for Ultrasonic Meters", to detect different conditions such as, a blocked flow conditioner, meter contamination, and liquid in the meter. We performed similar calculations to provide these same alarms for our Sick Maihak meters based on information we were given by John Lansing. There are some differences in the calculations each manufacturer recommends to detect the different alarm conditions. However, because both are chordal type meters, most of the logic used is identical. We used similar logic for the Instromet meters based on what data was available. The RTU display for this data is shown in figure 2.

Sick Maihak Ultrasonic Meter Polled Data			
4 + 1 Poll	Enabled		
Average SOS	1413.235		
Average Velocity	27.595		
Uncorr Flow Rate MACFH	4620.541		
Cord 1 SOS	1413.825	Cord 1 Velocity	25.707
Cord 2 SOS	1412.597	Cord 2 Velocity	28.410
Cord 3 SOS	1412.614	Cord 3 Velocity	28.277
Cord 4 SOS	1413.902	Cord 4 Velocity	24.113
Symmetry	1.045	Profile Factor	1.11319
Base Line Symmetry Factor	1.00000	Base Line Profile Factor	1.11000
Profile / Symmetry Alarm Percent	5.000	Profile / Symmetry Alarm Percent	5.000
Symmetry Factor Alarm	Normal	Profile Factor Alarm	Normal
Cal Flowrate Select	Run 1	Bidir Sta / Sta 2 Mtr Select	Run 1
Calculated SOS	1411.58	Calculated Flowrate	4532
Meter SOS	1413.23	Meter Flowrate	4621
Cal / Live SOS Pct Error	-0.117	Cal / Live Flowrate Pct Error	-0.077
SOS Alarm Percent	0.500	Path Velocity Spread	4.297
SOS Error Alarm	Normal	Path SOS Spread	1.306
SOS Spread Alarm	Normal	Write Press, Temp & Gas Quality to Meter	Enabled
		Data Write Delay Time in Sec	0.000

Figure 2, Meter Polling Basic Diagnostic Screen

For the Instromet meters, we are alarming on path performance, swirl, AGC level, and path status all from data we poll directly from the meter. We also generate alarms for profile factor, speed of sound spread, speed of sound error, frequency input error, and gas quality by performing various calculations in the flow computer.

With the Daniel meters, we are alarming on path performance, swirl, AGC level, path status, path turbulence, and cross flow, all from data we poll directly from the meter. We then generate alarms for profile factor, speed of sound spread, speed of sound error, frequency input error, volume calculation error, blocked flow conditioner, meter contamination, liquid, and gas quality by performing some calculations in the flow computer.

On the Sick Maihak meters, we are alarming on path performance, swirl, AGC level, path status, path turbulence, and signal to noise ratio, all from data we poll directly from the meter. We then generate alarms for profile factor, speed of sound spread, speed of sound error, frequency input error, volume calculation error, blocked flow conditioner, meter contamination, liquid, and gas quality. We compare the four path meter's flow rate and speed of sound to the single path meter by performing various calculations in the flow computer.

Our objective has always been to provide warnings for our meters without creating nuisance alarms and call-outs. For that reason, we require the velocity to be at least 5 feet per second and most alarm conditions must be true for 5 minutes in order to activate an alarm.

Self-Checking Redundant Measurement

Having the meter's data in the flow computer, allows us to perform some additional diagnostics that cannot be accomplished by the meter or flow computer alone. By comparing the data from both devices, we are able to perform a number of additional measurement system examinations. All of the data necessary to perform these health checks is already available we simply need that data in one location to utilize it. By adding an additional pressure transmitter and temperature transmitter we can take our analysis one step further. The addition of reference pressure and temperature values combined with the data from the meter and flow computer, gives us all the fundamental information necessary to build a complete self-checking redundant measurement system. The RTU display for the advanced diagnostic data is shown in figure 3.

Sick Malhak Ultrasonic Meter Advanced Diagnostics				
Unlatched	Push to Reset		Single Path Com ID	2
Path Performance	Normal		Path Status	Normal
Path AGC Level	Normal		Path Turbulence	Normal
Profile Factor	Normal		4 Plus 1 AGC Comparison	Normal
Symmetry Factor	Normal		Frequency Input	Normal
Gas Quality Check	Normal		Temp Check	Normal
SOS Error	Normal		Static Pressure Check	Normal
Calculation Check	Normal		SOS Spread	Normal
Blocked Flow Cond	Normal		Mtr Contamination	Normal
Signal to Noise	Normal		Liquid	Normal
Advanced Diagnostics Setup				
Press / Temp Mode	Primary	Reference		
Dual Press / Temp	Flux 2	Flux 1		
Pressure	% Limit	0.200	Primary	Reference
Temperature	% Limit	0.200	Diff	% of Reading
RTU to Meter Corrected Flowrate			858.72	858.43
4 Path to 1 Path SOS			43.38	43.35
4 Path to 1 Path Uncorrected Flowrate			81718.734	82935.055
RTU to 4 Path Uncorrected Flowrate			1329.9	1329.9
4 to 1 Max Flowrate % Limit	0.100		-24747.174	-24851.500
1 Path Adjust Factor	0.900		84951.988	-24747.174
Max Turbulence Limit	5.000		Max AGC Limit	50.000
			Min Performance Limit	95.000
			RTU to Mtr Max Flowrate % Limit	0.100
Go to Previous Display				
Return to Port Configuration MENU				

Figure 3, Meter Advanced/Self Diagnostic RTU Screen

For example, if two temperature transmitters, two pressure transmitters, a four path meter speed of sound, and a single path meter speed of sound values agree, and the measured speed of sound does not agree with the calculated speed of sound, we can make a logical assumption that the calculated speed of sound is using different gas quality than that actually flowing through the meter. This condition indicates a problem with the chromatograph or some other type of gas quality issue. In the case of the Daniel and Instromet meters, we are using the speed of sound spread to establish that the measured speed of sound is correct.

With the meter calculating a corrected flow rate, we can compare that value to the flow computers corrected flow rate. This comparison validates the flow calculation performed in the flow computer and provides backup measurement. When you combine these checks with other real time diagnostics such as insuring a good flow profile, meter performance and meter stability, we are able to significantly reduce our measurement uncertainty in the field, and provide a redundant self-checking measurement system at minimal additional cost. A system such as this could also be used to develop a "Condition Based Maintenance System". This system would be capable of informing the user when maintenance and calibrations are necessary, rather than performing these tasks on some repetitive schedule. Obviously, there would be some savings associated with the reduced maintenance and travel to meter stations using a system such as this. One should also note that the 2013 revision of API 21.1 contains some specific language regarding the use of redundancy verification for transmitters.

Other Applications

This same concept can be applied to other types of smart meters as well. Some Coriolis meters can be purchased with the ability to perform a "Smart Meter Verification". The verification is performed without measurement interruption so it can be executed without having someone onsite. The meter can be set up to perform the verification on a schedule, and the

results of that verification, as well as other meter data can be polled via Modbus from a flow computer. It is then passed on to a SCADA system for monitoring and historical trending. We have several Coriolis meters that were purchased with the verification capabilities. We configured the meter to schedule the verification once a day, and then poll for the verification registers.

Click Here ▾	SOS Err	Prof. Factor	Symmetry	vg Speed Of Sour	Avg Velocity	SOS Err Alarm	Prof Fac Alarm	Symmetry Alarm	SOS Spread Alm	UMAC-1A	UMAC-1B	UMAC-C
_RUN1	0.0729	1.57872	0.14823	1408.191	0.05652	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
_RUN1	-0.23203	1.125	1.02	1396.969	29.95425	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
A_RUN1	-0.09148	1.13949	0.98585	1416.589	20.59407	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	0.36696	-0.65843	-1.58437	1421.968	-0.02215	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	-0.00281	-1.06938	1.	1409.093	0.00635	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	-0.376	1.00521	0.95897	1333.522	16.86827	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN2	0.25694	-0.12652	-2.71294	1411.901	-0.00115	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	0.13175	5.49984	-0.79131	1411.901	-0.00449	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
B_RUN1	0.13955	0.61757	0.04301	1400.567	0.10856	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
A_RUN1	-0.00136	1.1549	0.79928	1380.188	1.67264	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	0.19603	-0.36245	-2.18254	1427.666	0.00128	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	-0.26439	1.05077	0.84318	1345.285	1.57727	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
_RUN1	-0.0509	3.16973	5.52549	1376.161	0.00541	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN2	-0.0955	-0.43415	-1.63406	1423.356	0.00423	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	-0.46903	1.21509	-0.43698	1408.475	0.00667	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0
_RUN1	5.12562	0.89821	-0.52876			NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
_RUN2	-0.3112	1.29247	1.	1424.885	0.01299	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
_RUN1	-0.7676	1.12194	0.99021	1357.135	14.66242	ALARM	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	8
_RUN1	100	1	1	0	0	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
B_RUN1	100	1	1	0	0	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			
A_RUN1	100	1	1	0	0	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL			

Figure 4, Ultrasonic Data displayed in SCADA

This data provides us with, Test Run Status, Test Abort Status, Test Completion Status, and Tube Stiffness Status. We also poll for an alarm register that can be decoded to individual alarm points, and registers that provide the raw tube frequency, pickoff voltages, drive gain and live zero value. Examples of the RTU coriolis meter diagnostic screen and the SCADA diagnostics screen can be seen in figures 4 and 5.

Micro Motion Meter Polled Data			
RTU Run Select	Run 1	RTU to Mtr Max Flowrate % Limit	5.000
Meter Diagnostic Code	1048576.000	Meter Flowrate LBS/Hour	857.057
Meter Density (Typically 0.0)	0.000	Calculated Flowrate	860.400
Meter Internal Temp	60.1	Cal / Live Flowrate Pct Error	-0.030
RTU Meter Temp	0.0	Frequency Alarm	Normal
	Drive Gain / Tube Freq PCT Max	10.000	
Drive Gain	4.066	Tube Frequency	122.429
Drive Gain Base	4.00000	Tube Frequency Baseline	122.00
Drive Gain Alarm	Normal	Tube Frequency Alarm	Normal
	LPV / RPV PCT Max	5.000	
Left Pickoff Voltage	0.440	Right Pickoff Voltage	0.446
LPV Base Line	0.43000	RPV Base Line	0.45000
LPV Alarm	Normal	RPV Alarm	Normal
Meter Zero Verification			
	Perform Zero Test	Start Zero Test	
Zero Test Time / Sec	120.000	Zero Test Run Status	Test In Progress
Meter Base Zero Stability	0.025	Meter Zero LBS/MIN	0.000
Zero Stability Status	Meter Zero OK	Zero Test Time Stamp	
SMART METER VERIFICATION			
	Verification Run Status	Verification Idle	
Last Verification Date Time	04/16/2014 08:47:20	Abort Code	Verification Successful
Inlet Tube Stiffness	0.151	Outlet Tube Stiffness	0.101
Inlet Test Status	Verification Passed	Outlet Test Status	Verification Passed

Figure 5, Coriolis Meter Data RTU Diagnostic Screen

Lessons Learned

As we have worked through this process over the years, we have made some changes and learned what works best for us. We found that using our SCADA system to set alarms around raw data values did not always provide the results we wanted. Analyzing the data in the SCADA system works well for some, but was somewhat problematic for us. Our issues were primarily associated with improperly set alarms requiring additional set up work for our already over worked SCADA programmers. Many ultrasonic meter health indicators provide adequate information necessary to determine the health of the meter when analyzed by someone with some ultrasonic meter expertise. A less experienced user, such as a new Technician or Gas Controller, may not be equipped with the experience necessary to perform these tasks. Performing the diagnostic logic in the flow computer enabled us to more effectively provide decipherable statuses for each meter health indicator in our SCADA system. This established a more consistent means of alarming.

Performing the diagnostics in the flow computer gave us better control over our base line and alarm settings as well. On the other hand, performing these diagnostics in the flow computer requires some programming expertise. Evaluating the method that works best for you may depend on the availability of personnel to perform these tasks.

Regardless of the method chosen to gather and diagnose the meter's health, the data will be available for Technicians, Data Analysts and Specialists to use for in-depth analysis and trending purposes. Another lesson learned, was if the data was difficult to find, view or trend in the SCADA system, then the process of additional analysis or trending of the data just didn't happen. Originally, our diagnostic data was buried in a detail display that listed every piece of data that was being polled or calculated. Consequently, when our Measurement Technicians went into our SCADA system to review the data, it took far too much time to find and view. To resolve this problem, we worked with our SCADA programmers to display the data where it was easy to access in a format that allowed users to quickly view the data, and determine if further investigation was needed. The SCADA display is shown in figure 6.

Right Click Here	Drive Gain	Left Pick Off Voltage	Right Pick Off Voltage	Tube Frequency	Freq Input Alarm	Drive Gain Alarm	Left Pick Off Alarm	Right Pick Off Alarm	Tube Freq Alarm	Diagnostic Status	Inlet Tube Status	Inlet Stiffness	Outlet Tube Status	Outlet Tube Stiffness
RUN1	4.400748	0.4215219	0.4185174	122.5109	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0.1597166	0	0.1826763
RUN1	10.29893	0.5429657	0.5577596	154.1195	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0.1407385	0	0.09912252
RUN1	4.489076	0.4442223	0.4380201	122.4556	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0.1305819	0	0.3330827
RUN1	4.103268	0.4360698	0.4441345	122.0051	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0.1698852	0	0.10252
RUN1	4.845829	0.4189918	0.416163	121.5935	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0	0	0
RUN1	4.483627	0.5292963	0.52898	302.4146	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0	0	0
RUN1					NORMAL	ALARM	ALARM	ALARM	ALARM	0	0	0	0	0
RUN1														
RUN1	4.855706	0.4039167	0.4451008	123.0799	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	0.1068354	0	-0.1940489
RUN1	0	0	0	0	NORMAL	NORMAL	ALARM	ALARM	NORMAL	0	0	0	0	0
RUN1	9.504672	0.5421575	0.550679	153.1483	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	0	0	-0.1271009	0	-0.27408
RUN2	9.696848	0.5515223	0.5354985	152.6544	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	1048576	0	0.3391981	0	0.3903031
RUN1	3.729517	0.4452414	0.4445913	122.6641	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	NORMAL	1048576	0	0.638926	0	0.5976319

Figure 6, Coriolis Meter Data displayed in SCADA

When we began modifying our polling logic for the redundant self-checking diagnostics, we realized this was a large number of individual alarms to bring into the SCADA system. To resolve this problem, we grouped the self-checking alarms into three floating point alarm signals. Each alarm signal contains 6 or 7 normal/alarm statuses. These three alarm floating point registers can then be decoded by converting them to binary values to identify the specific alarms. Alarm signal UMAC_1A contains alarms for profile factor, symmetry, path performance, AGC levels, path status, signal to noise ratio, and four plus 1 meter profile. Alarm signal UMAC-1B contains alarms for swirl, cross flow, blocked conditioner, turbulence, contamination, and liquid. Alarm Signal UMAC-Calc contains alarms for frequency input, speed of sound error, speed of sound spread, gas quality, temperature, pressure, and flow calculation.

Analyzing Historical Data

Figure 7 shows an example of the alarms indicating a partially blocked flow conditioner. Here we have a UMAC_1A alarm value of 65, indicating a 4 + 1 profile alarm and a profile factor that is outside its alarm limits. This condition is indicated again in UMAC_1B with a value of 12, indicating high turbulence and a blocked flow conditioner.

UMAC-	65					
1A						
4+1	SNR	Path	AGC	Perf	Symm	Profile
Profile	Warn	Status	Warn	Warn	Warn	Input

1000001

UMAC-	12					
1B						
NA	Liquid	Contam	Turb	Block	Cross	Swrl
NA	Warn	Warn	Warn	Cond	Flow	Warn

1100

Figure 7, Blocked Flow Conditioner Alarm Example

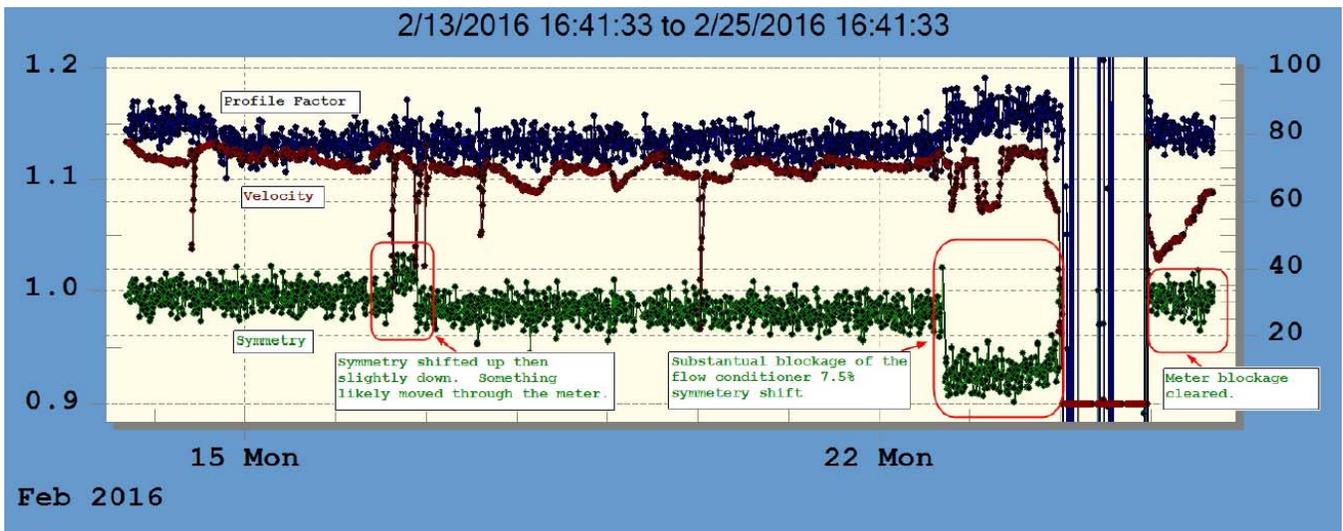


Figure 8, Blocked Flow Conditioner Data Trend

In the next example, shown in figure 9 we have an ultrasonic meter with an intermittently failing transducer. The failing transducer would at times show a lower velocity than it should to the point of going negative and sometimes it would fail. With this particular instance when the failing path would show a negative value the average velocity was right at 20% lower than the weighted average of the other 3 paths. When the path would completely fail the path substitution would take over and the meter would provide a proper average velocity

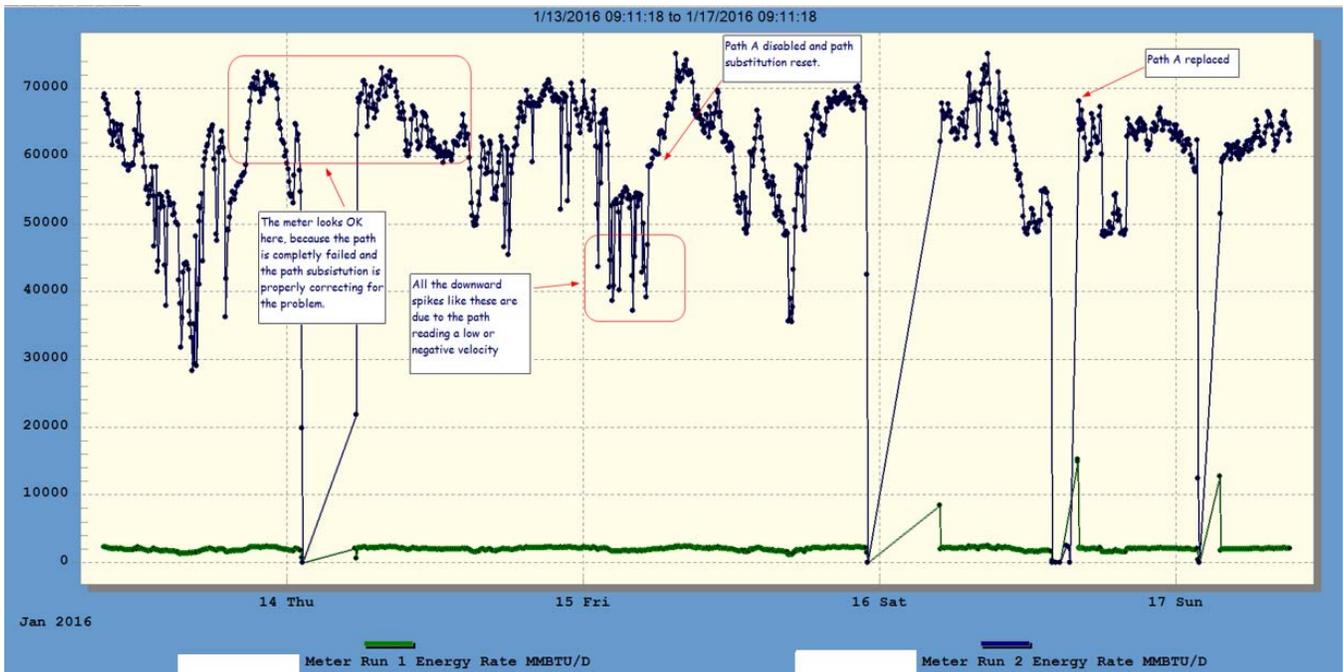


Figure 9, Intermittent Transducer Fail Data Trend

Figure 10 is a trend of the velocity and alarm history for intermittent transducer fail condition.

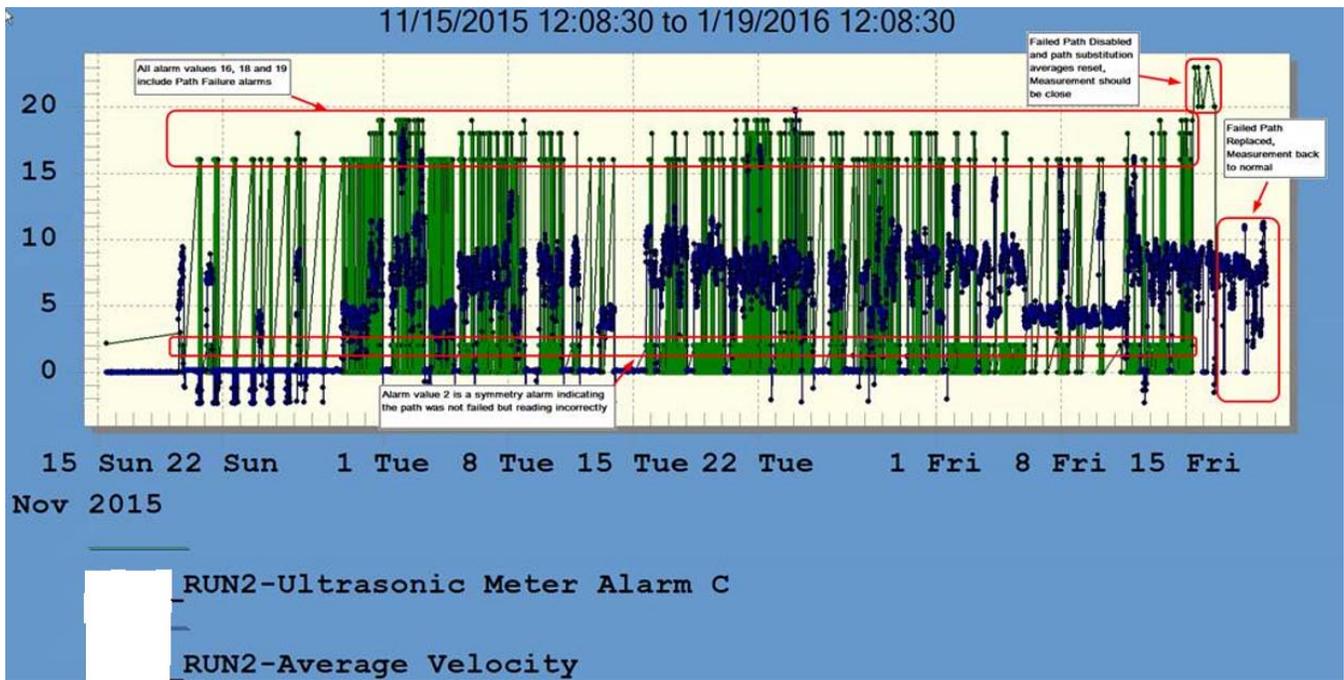


Figure 10, Intermittent Transducer Fail Alarm Trend

Figure 11 displays how a Technician or Analyst can perform quick seven day trends of all of this data from the SCADA system, by simply right clicking on the values wanted, and adding them to a graph. Longer trends can be performed as well, by accessing the data wanted in an ADHOC report, and then building the graph in Excel. The seven day trends are a quick and easy way for a Technician to use the SCADA system to find data on a meter he was unable to test when the meter was flowing. By trending the velocity, the Technician can locate a section of time when the meter was flowing and trend additional data such as, profile factor, symmetry, etc. during that same section of time.

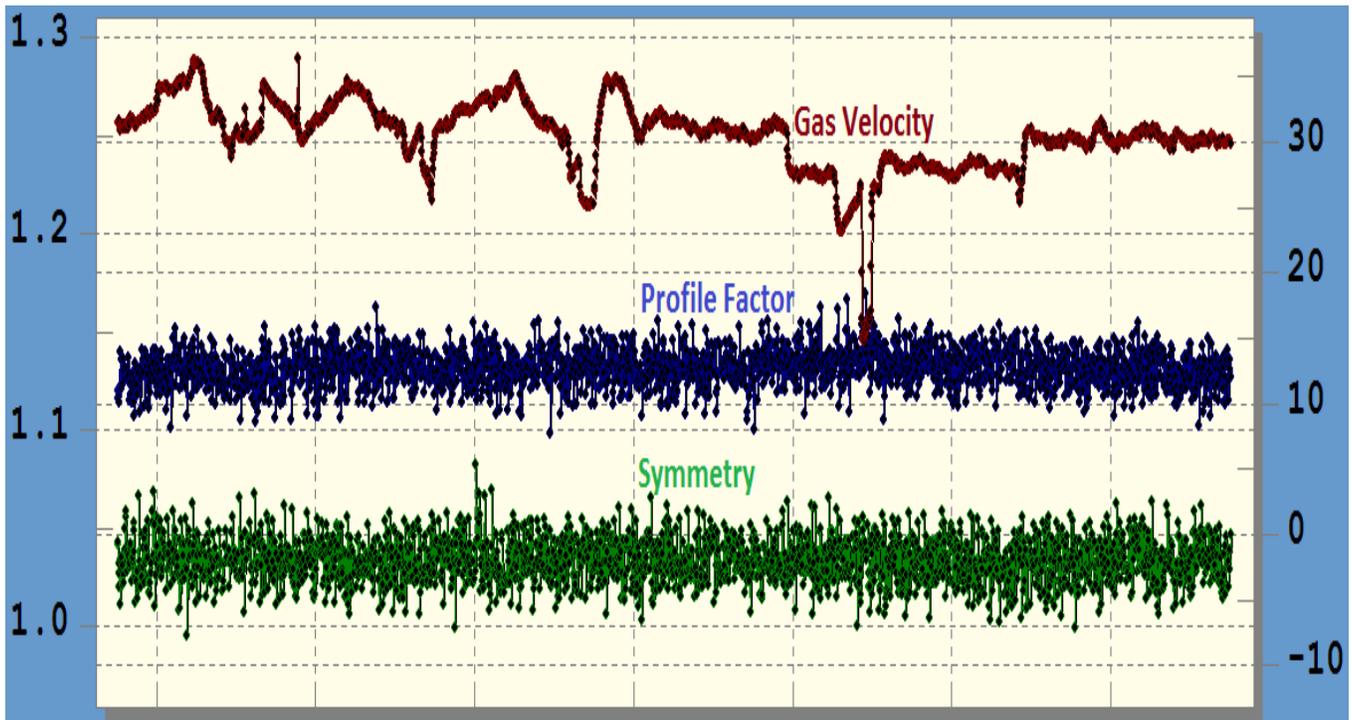


Figure 11, 7 Day Trend Example.

A combination of Normal / Alarm statuses and analog historical data provides immediate indication of alarm conditions for the entire measurement system, as well as the ability to trend data to look for subtle changes over time. Currently, this data is stored in our SCADA system, at a scan-by-scan level for 1 year, then rolled up to hourly and daily averages for 5 years. This type of data analysis requires more time and skill to utilize. It may not be used until there are imbalance issues, but it makes the data readily available when needed.

Logging Meter Alarms

Along with bringing the data into the SCADA system, we set up the flow computer to log the ultrasonic meter alarms. This provides documentation of these alarms in the measurement accounting data base with a date and time stamp. Meter alarm logging also provides us with another method to catch and document potential measurement problems.

Next Generation Diagnostics

As we have progressed with our current measurement diagnostic system, we have discovered the need to do a few things differently. That need to improve on our system has brought us to the development of our Advanced Diagnostic Monitoring System or ADMS. Our ADMS system employs a flow computer that is separate from the one used on site for custody transfer. Utilizing a separate flow computer for our real time diagnostics allows us to utilize this functionality where the preferred or existing flow computer is incapable of performing the extensive polling or logic for the diagnostics. The ADMS flow computer will provide polling to the meters, the custody transfer flow computer and the gas chromatograph.

As well as performing the collecting of data the ADMS flow computer also provides instantaneous data filtering and alarming as well as data roll up to hourly minimum, maximum and averaged values. The instantaneous alarm data is packed into a number of 8 bit registers for quick polling. The rolled up data will be pulled into our ADMS database which provides additional data filtering, analysis, trending and storage. The combination of our ADMS field device and database provides both real time and historical diagnostics and alarming of the entire measurement system at the meter station. The ADMS system will also take the responsibility for data handling, trending and storage out of our SCADA system, giving the measurement department better control over the development of the database, storage of the data and configuration of alarm settings.

The ADMS field device is setup to poll up to 8 bidirectional custody and check meters, with up to 8 paths. The current meters include Daniel, SICK, Instronet ultrasonic meters and Micro Motion Coriolis meters. We can also do some custom setups for other meters but that would involve a substantial amount of data mapping that otherwise is done automatically when the user selects the meter type. The field device programming has been completed and the Database will be complete later this year. We have projects in place to install 51 ADMS field devices this year. The ADMS database allows the user to pull up all the meter's historical data, graph and trend the data as well as providing alarms when the meters parameters fall outside limits. As long term data in the ADMS Database is analyzed we anticipate the ability to tighten alarm bands, perform preventive maintenance and predetermine component failures. For smaller ultrasonic meter stations where we choose not invest the dollars in the ADMS field device, the meter's maintenance logs can be loaded into the ADMS Database.

ADMS Daniel Overview RUN 3

[Click Here to Goto Alarm Detail Page](#)

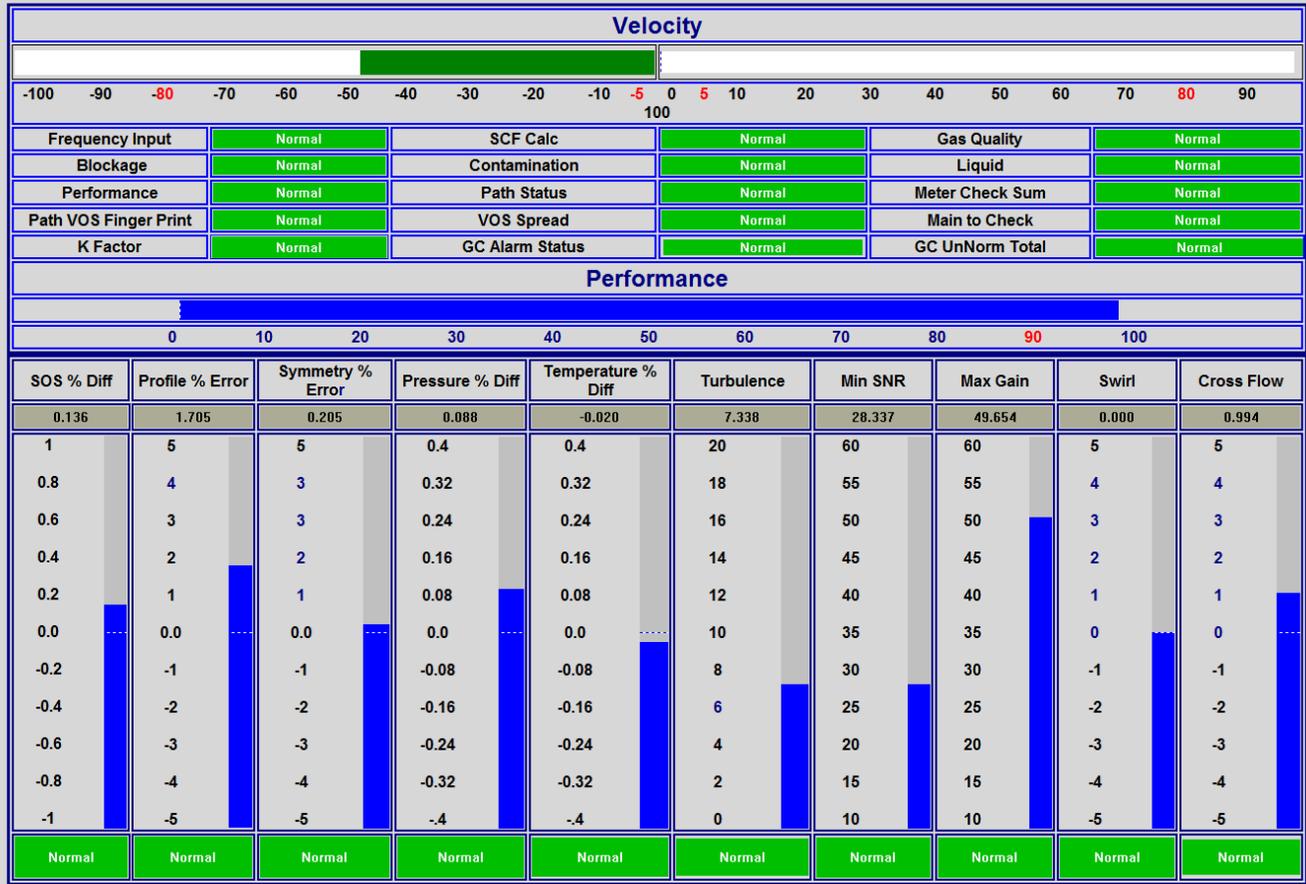


Figure 12, ADMS Field Device USM Overview.

Daniel Diagnostic Snapshot Report

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Site Name	ADMS Roswell Test	Run ID	Run 3	Gas Velocity	-49.5
Discription					
	Baseline	Reference	Primary	Pct Difference	Alarm Status
Meter Config Checksum	40385	40385	NA	NA	Normal
ACFH	0.10	-3327520.5	3351350.8	-0.7	Normal
SCF	0.10	-178568288.0	174815104.0	-0.1	Normal
Speed of Sound	0.50	1343.0	1346.0	0.22	Normal
Profile Factor	4.00	1.13	1.15	1.47	Normal
Symmetry	3.00	0.98	1.00	1.76	Normal
Pressure	0.20	690.13	690.71	0.08	Normal
Temperature	0.20	64.49	64.39	-0.020	Normal
K Factor	66.36	NA	66.36	NA	Normal
Turbulence	10.00	NA	7.66	NA	Normal
Meter Performance	90.00	NA	100.00	NA	Normal
VOS Spread	2.00	NA	0.64	NA	Normal
Gain	50.00	NA	48.92	NA	Normal
Signal to Noise Ratio	20.00	NA	29.16	NA	Normal
Swirl	3.00	NA	0.000	NA	Normal
Cross Flow	3.00	NA	0.996	NA	Normal
Main to Check ACFH	5.00	-3318323.25	-3327520.50	0.277	Normal
Other Alarms					
Meter Blockage	Normal	Contamination	Normal	Path Status	Normal
Gas Quality	Normal	Liquid	Normal	VOS Finger Print	Normal
GAS Chromatograph					
UnNormalized Total	UnNormalized Total Alarm	GC Response Factor Order	GC Alarm Status	Last Cal Date / Time	
100.03	Normal	Normal	Normal	42717	402

Figure 13, ADMS Field Device USM Snapshot Report.



Figure 14, ADMS Field Device Coriolis Overview.

Diagnostic Snapshot Report

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Site Name	Run ID	Run 2	Gas Velocity	0.0	
Other Alarms					
Discription	Baseline	Reference	Primary	Pct Differance	Alarm Status
Meter Config Checksum	0	0	NA	NA	Normal
Frequency	0.10	0.0	0.0	0.0	Normal
Volume Calc	0.10	0.0	0.0	0.0	Normal
Density	0.50	NA	0.0	NA	Normal
Left Pickoff Voltage	0.60		0.50		Normal
Right Pickoff Voltage	0.60		0.51		Normal
Tube Frequency	200.00		194.79		Normal
Temperature	2.00	90.28	87.28	-0.546	Normal
K Factor	1000.00		1000.00		Normal
SMV Inlet Stiffness	4.00		2.06		Normal
SMV Outlet Stiffness	4.00	NA	1.78	NA	Normal
Other Alarms					
SMV Inlet	PASS	Contamination	Normal	Last SMV Test Date	42517
SMV Outlet	PASS	SMV Pass/ Fail	PASS	Last SMV Test Time	1541
Diagnostic Register	1048576				

Figure 15, ADMS Field Device Coriolis Snapshot Report.

The ADMS field devices polls up to 100 data points per meter, based on meter type, 36 data points from Micro Motion Coriolis meters, 47 data points from Daniel and ABB GCs and 9 points from the custody flow computer. This data is analyzed and compared back to baseline data from the meters flow calibration. Data from the meter, flow computer and calculations made in the ADMS field device are compared to provide additional alarming and confidence in the stations measurement system.

The ADMS Database provides data storage, reporting, trending, graphing, and alarm history of hourly data collected from the ADMS field devices as well as maintenance reports that can be downloaded into the system. The data can also be rolled up into daily, weekly or monthly values for longer trends or analysis.

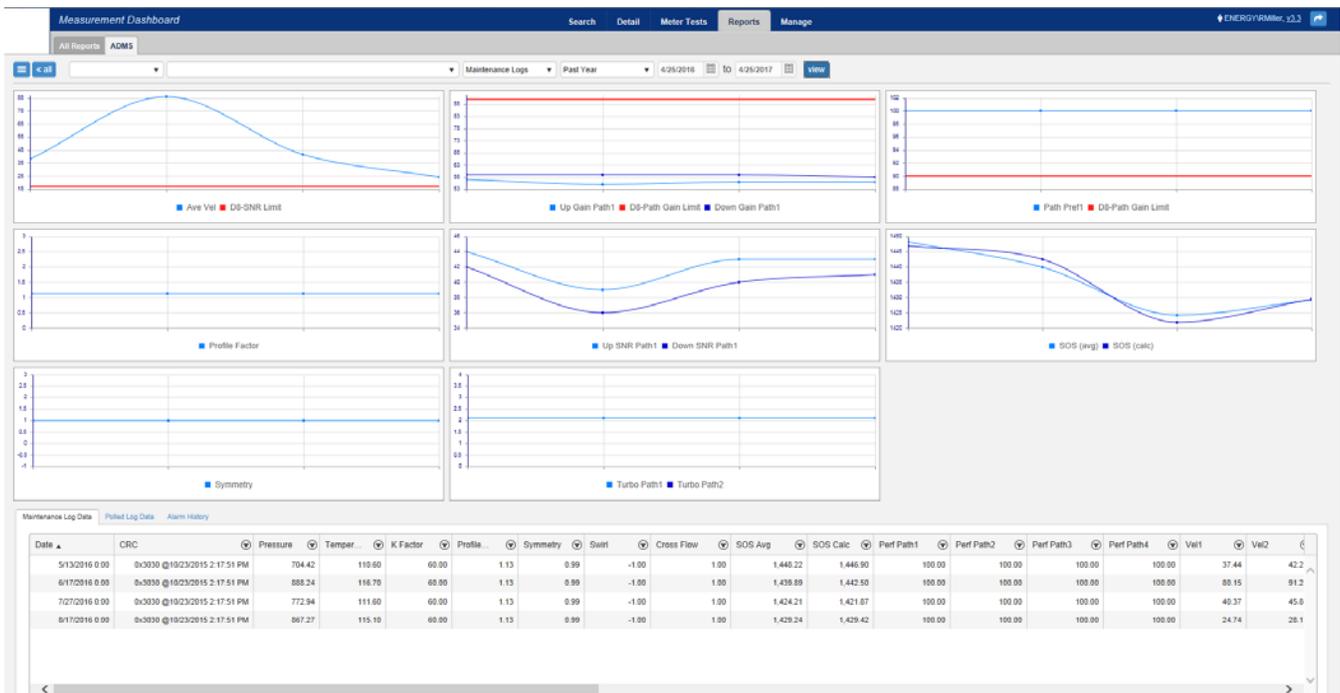


Figure 16, ADMS Database USM Overview.

Summary

We are currently performing our self-diagnostic polling on more than 100 ultrasonic meters and 15 Coriolis meters. With the addition of our ADMS system we will be polling nearly 200 meters by year's end. We will also have maintenance logs from 200 or more meters downloaded into our ADMS database monthly. Currently the responsibility of monitoring these alarms has been assigned to the Technicians and Measurement Specialist for each area. Eventually we hope to have an employee whose primary responsibility is to monitor the entire system.

The initial research and code writing to perform the meter polling and diagnostics was admittedly time consuming. Taking the time to automate much of the set up process for the flow computer made the field set up relatively simple. As expected, it can be challenging to find the time to analyze and trend data. Having the data stored in an accessible location is the only feasible means we've found of accomplishing such a task.

We have found that our real time meter diagnostics provides a means for our Technicians and Measurement Specialists to tell at a glance if they have a potential problem with a meter. When the Technicians are unable to travel to a meter while it is flowing to perform a meter test, they can now easily look at historical data in the SCADA system to review the diagnostic data polled when the meter last flowed. Furthermore, the historical data provides easily accessible data for an in-depth analysis.

Conclusion

As when our industry progressed from chart recorders to Electronic Flow Measurement years ago, companies must continue to adapt and change as new technologies become available to remain competitive. Today's standard accepted method of testing smart meters such as ultrasonic meters is basically performed no differently than how we tested meters twenty five years ago. Like the old chart recorder, while we were comfortable with it at the time, it is quite easy to see now that the equipment and method was unacceptably inefficient and inadequate in comparison to EFM. The same can be said of our current method used for insuring accurate measurement. These changes don't come without initial costs and many hours of development. As with EFM, the return on this investment will come over time, ultimately paying for itself many times over.

Seeing what our diagnostic system has provided, I am convinced that Smart Measurement Diagnostic Systems will become the standard means of measurement validation throughout our industry in the years to come.

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