

ROUTE MANAGER VRT:

The New System Software for the TRACE VRT AMR Solution

The TRACE® Route Manager VRT is part of the TRACE VRT Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system that uses mobile, two-way, radio-frequency (RF) communication technology to request and collect specific meter data.

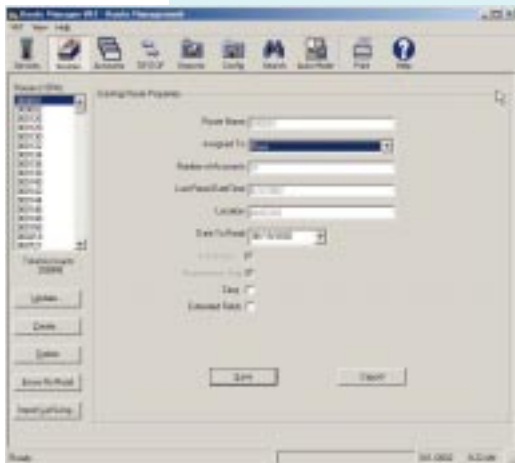
The system includes:

- ▶ Transponders that encode, process, and store individual meter data and then, on command from an interrogator, transmit requested meter data. This processing and storing of meter data and two-way communication provides data acquisition flexibility usually associated with more expensive, fixed-base AMR systems.

- ▶ Mobile interrogators that establish a two-way communication link with individual transponders and request, receive and store specific meter data for transfer to TRACE VRT route management software. Mobile interrogators offer a lower infrastructure investment over a fixed-base system with the added advantage of operational flexibility.
- ▶ Route management software that:
 - ▶ processes route files from a Utility's customer information system (CIS)
 - ▶ downloads and uploads meter routes to and from interrogators
 - ▶ stores meter readings for local validation, editing and analysis
 - ▶ creates files to transfer meter readings to the Utility's CIS.

Route Manager VRT

Route Manager VRT is the TRACE VRT system software that integrates TRACE VRT transponders and interrogation devices into an AMR system and provides the interface between the TRACE VRT AMR system and a utility company's customer information system.



Basic Operation

Data is exchanged between Route Manager VRT and a CIS through files. The routes in a file received by Route Manager VRT can include both electronic meter-reading routes (EMR) and automated meter-reading routes (AMR). Routes, account data and interrogation devices are all managed by Route Manager VRT. The Routes section

includes a comprehensive set of features to manage routes including route splitting, the combining of split routes and resequencing. In addition, the operator can edit VRT requests received from the CIS and add new requests. VRT requests can include instructions to read one or more of:

- ▶ the 35 days of daily index readings
- ▶ up to four time-of-use (TOU) electronic indexes (e-indexes) maintained in TRACE VRT gas and water transponders, and up to six for electric transponders.

The Devices section is used to assign routes to various interrogation devices.

Interrogators

Route data is transferred between Route Manager VRT and the TRACE® Mini-Mobile Interrogators (MMI) VRT using a 3.5" diskette. With the Auto Mode section, routes can be transferred automatically between Route Manager VRT and handheld data terminals that support TRACE VRT ReadIt! software. Route data can also be transferred manually via a serial connection. Account information can be viewed and edited through the Accounts section. This includes the manual entry of selected data and the adding and editing of VRT requests. Route Manager VRT maintains up to 13 months of meter-reading data that can be viewed in tabular graphical formats. Route Manager VRT includes extensive search capabilities and reporting.

Route Manager VRT Specifications

Operating Systems

- ▶ Windows NT4, Windows 2000 and Windows XP Professional
- ▶ CIS Data-Exchange Files
- ▶ Data can be exchanged between a Utility's CIS and Route Manager VRT in either the standard Route Manager VRT file format or the CIS file format using an optional Route Manager VRT custom filter.

Data Base

ODBC-compliant MS SQL server, providing client/server access to the database locally or over a LAN. Data can also be accessed from Microsoft Office and third-party reporting tools.

Configurable Operating Parameters

- ▶ Level-based security
- ▶ Audit trail of operator activity
- ▶ Location-dependent access to data

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