

What's New - vbX

The latest Ascent 2011 firmware release for Commtest's vbX instruments is a 'feature release' offering a number of new features in addition to numerous refinements to existing instrument functionality.

vbX (vb5™, vb6™, vb7 and vb8™, vbBalancer™ and vbBalancer+™) instrument owners are encouraged to upgrade their instruments with this firmware to improve product stability and to access new features.

Instruments will be automatically upgraded to operating system version 3.5.6 during the proflash sequence if they were not upgraded during a previous Ascent 2010 firmware upgrade. Operating system upgrade instructions are available for download from the Commtest Instruments website.

NOTE: This firmware upgrade is not compatible with Chinese language instruments. A separate firmware and operating system update file, including operating system 3.5.7 for Chinese-language instruments, is available for download from the Commtest Instruments website.

This document is intended as an overview only. To learn how to use any of the new instrument functionality, please refer to the Help files within the Ascent® software (accessible from the Help menu).

Alternatively, download the latest vbSeries/vbBalancer Instrument Reference Guide from our website at <http://www.commtest.com>.

Band Alarms

Alarm Bands configured in the Ascent software can now be compared to measurements taken during route collection in real time. Alerts are displayed on the instrument if these alarm thresholds are exceeded.

Alarm warnings can be displayed either via an onscreen message stating the alert condition, or using the instrument's 'Danger', 'Alert' and 'OK' front panel LEDs.

Order Tracking

If Machine speed varies significantly while a recording is being taken, the resulting spectral peaks may appear as smeared bumps instead of sharp peaks. Subtle spectral features like early bearing defects may not be clear in the spectrum.

The Order Tracking system prevents this 'smearing' by automatically adjusting the data sampling rate to obtain a constant number of samples per revolution of the Machine. To provide the precise timing information required, a tachometer sensor must be used.

Order tracking can be applied only to Spectrum, Waveform, Coast-down/Run-up, Demodulation and Orbit Plot measurements on vb6, vb7 and vb8 instruments.

Memory State and Alerts

Instruments now display the percentage of instrument memory currently being utilized ([0] Options from the main menu. The percentage of memory in use will be displayed beside [4] Memory & System. The instrument's memory usage is also detailed when pressing [4] Memory & System). If memory use is allowed to exceed 80% of the device's 1 GB memory capacity, a flashing warning will be displayed on the main menu advising operators to clear system memory.

Recycle Bin Emptying

When a folder is deleted, a backup copy is generated automatically and stored in the vbX instrument recycle bin. If the folder was deleted or overwritten by accident, or an instrument operators wishes to restore a folder for any reason, they can do so. To conserve memory space only the five most recently deleted folders are kept.

Users are now able to manually empty the recycle bin by selecting [4] Folders>[8] Empty Recycle Bin. Manually clearing this data can improve general instrument operating speeds.

Miscellaneous Improvements

In addition to the previously discussed improvements, the following general changes have been made in the latest vbSeries instrument firmware release:

Portuguese language support

- The vbX instrument interface now includes support for the Portuguese (BR) language for instruments configured for the 'Americas' and 'Europe' regions ([0] Options>[7] Language).

Date format

- Time can now be displayed on the instrument in either 12 or 24-hour formats ([0] Options>[0] Date/Time>[9] Time Format).

Long Time Waveform time

- When recording or charting long time waveforms, instruments have previously displayed only the number of 'blocks' recorded during the measurement (either above the measurement during recording or across the x axis when charted). They will now display the actual elapsed time of the measurement in conventional HH:MM:SS format.

Instrument region display

- The regional settings of instruments are now displayed in the Memory & System screen ([0] Options>[4] Memory & System. This setting determines the languages that are currently supported by the instrument.

New Demod bandwidths for low speed machines

- vbX instruments now support Dmin values of 250 Hz to 10 kHz and 500 Hz to 10 kHz for conventional demodulation recordings, removing the need to reduce Dmax settings below 10 kHz.

Percentage or route completed

- When viewing folders ([4] Folders from the main menu) the percentage of routes completed is now displayed in the right-hand window.

General usability and stability enhancements

- Various software bugs and compatibility issues identified in previous firmware releases have been resolved.