

Oil in Water Analyzers



A detailed analysis of water intake protection systems

Challenges, technologies and solutions

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INTRODUCTION

One of the very first steps in any drinking and clean Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is the abstraction of water from a **water source**. Typical water sources used for these applications include wells, springs, rivers, reservoirs, lakes and the sea. Each water source presents a specific set of challenges and characteristics yet they may all be subject to **anthropogenic pollution events**, such as oil and chemical spills from roads, industry, household and even from malicious acts of pollution.

In this document we will discuss how these pollution events can affect a WTP, how an early warning system can be used to protect the WTP from damage caused by pollution and how the Multisensor Systems' MS1200 Total VOC monitor has been used in hundreds of WTP around the world to protect assets and ensure high standards of compliance in drinking water quality without costly disruption.



Figure 1. — Blue Rock Dam Intake

According to studies conducted by UNESCO, much of the **industrial wastewater** generated around the world is discharged **untreated** into open watercourses, which reduces the quality of larger bodies of water and can contaminate aquifers¹. In the US, 60% of the water comes from freshwater sources but nearly a quarter of rivers and streams are so heavily polluted they are hazardous to human health². In China in 2018, 57% of surface fresh water was categorized as “non Grade II” which means it was not suitable for use in drinking water³. Finally, in Europe, more than 60% of surface waters have reached an unacceptable standard for the European Environment Agency⁴.

These examples show that the story is the same everywhere. The quality of our water sources has

been steadily deteriorating. At the same time, a growing population and increasingly **stringent regulations** mean the demand for high quality water is also increasing. The task for operators and water quality managers in meeting this demand whilst dealing with unpredictable levels of pollution is extremely challenging.

SOURCES OF WATER POLLUTION

There are many potential sources for water pollution. Some typical examples include:

- Illegal Disposal of Waste
- Road and Rail Accidents
- Damage to Pipelines
- Commercial and Pleasure Craft and Shipping
- Stored Fuel Oil in Commercial and Domestic Applications
- Chemical Spills from Industry
- Historic Groundwater Contamination
- Military Installations
- Malicious Acts and Terrorism

EFFECTS OF WATER POLLUTION ON A WATER TREATMENT PLANT

When polluted water enters a WTP, there are various issues which may arise, depending upon the size of the pollution event, the nature of the contaminants present, the design of the plant and the treatment processes to name but a few. Usually, during a pollution event, critical points to consider include:

- **Activated carbon filters, RO membranes and filters:** expensive to replace and/or clean

1 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/facts-and-figures/all-facts-wwdr3/fact-36-industrial-wastewater/>

2 https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-03/documents/fact_sheet_draft_variation_march_2016_revision.pdf

3 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1065058/china-share-of-river-water-quality-across-the-country/>

4 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-water/>

- **Regulatory compliance:** some pollutants will go through the process and reach the population
- **Disruption of supply:** in some cases, production will have to be suspended to clean the WTP
- **Loss of revenue:** when water companies are paid for the amount of delivered water
- **Public relations disaster:** the media is always hungry for the next “environmental scandal”
- **Clean-up costs:** takes time, resources, effort and money

POLLUTION EVENTS AND VOCs

Pollution is a very general term, a definition is:

“the presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance which has harmful or poisonous effects.”

To date, there at least **85,000 listed toxic chemicals**⁵ and WTP only routinely test for a small percentage. Additionally, for most plants these tests are carried out on a monthly or annual basis, rather than daily. This makes it very difficult to react rapidly to pollution events.



Figure 2. — Water pollution at an effluent

For the design of an on-line early warning system that can be used and relied upon in a real-life scenario, it is important to focus on one of the most common sources of water pollution: **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**. The table on the next page lists the most common sources of industrial VOCs.

Measuring Total VOCs is a good way to look for anthropogenic pollution as **hydrocarbons** are present in many man-made products and VOCs are not naturally present in high concentrations in watercourses. Table 1 shows the relationship between many VOCs and potential industrial

sources. For a more detailed analysis of the risks associated with VOCs, information can be found in the report titled: “Volatile Organic Compounds - Understanding the Risks to Drinking Water” by the UK National Centre for Environmental Technology⁶.

Throughout the course of this article we will be referring to Total Volatile Organic Compounds (TVOC) as a measure for all VOCs, hydrocarbons, pollution and oil in water. This is the general approach taken by Multisensor Systems Ltd.: by detecting TVOC it is possible to have a **comprehensive**, wide detection scope which will result in the best possible protection for a WTP.

VOC DETECTION APPROACHES AND ISSUES

There are various measurements and detection methods for VOCs. Laboratory based techniques are the most accurate methods. How-

ever, they are also the **slowest and most expensive techniques** on the market. These techniques include Gas Chromatography with Mass Spectrometry or Flame Ionisation Detection (FID) analysers, the costs of which can easily run to over \$100K per year.

Laser based methods for detecting oil in water are also available, but these require the **oil to be in an emulsion state** or to have formed a slick on the surface of the water (oil on water). These methods can only detect relatively high concentrations of oil; typically 1 ppm for oil in water and much higher for oil on water detection. Both of these detection limits may lead to concentrations at which damage occurs to a WTP.

The oil on water detector measures the reflectance change of the surface, a property which changes when layers of oil are present. The system requires a **motionless surface**, free from

5 <https://www.epa.gov/tsca-inventory/about-tsca-chemical-substance-inventory>

6 <http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/research/completed-research/reports/DWI70-2-292.pdf>

dust and debris and must be out of direct sunlight.

Some oil in water detectors use optical measurement techniques and can often measure down to 1 ppm concentrations. This technique offers 24/7 online monitoring but is susceptible to **false results** if the water has a high turbidity level, which is common in surface waters. The detectors need regular maintenance and cleaning of the sample chamber, as particles can clog the system up.

Fortunately, more cost effective, faster and more portable methods of VOC detection are available, such as photoionisation detectors (PIDs) and **Electronic Nose Technology** (E-NOSE). A photoionisation detector (PID) uses an ultra-

violet (UV) lamp to irradiate incoming gas. The UV energy ionises the molecules, producing an ionic current which is then measured. PID's are **broadband detectors** and as such are not selective; they ionise all molecules with a similar ionisation energy to the UV lamp in use that pass through the detector. This means they are good at detecting a wide range of VOCs and they can give a quick on the spot measurement of VOC concentrations.

PID instruments also have some significant disadvantages:

- water vapour, condensation, temperature and quenching can limit their performance to 0.1 ppm (at best under controlled conditions) but typically 1 ppm

VOCs	INDUSTRIAL SOURCE
BTEX (Benzene, Toluene, Ethyl benzene, Xylene), Hexane, Cyclohexane and Trimethylbenzene.	Petrol, diesel, fuel oil, paint thinners, oil based stains and paints, insecticides, mineral spirits and furniture polishes
Acetone, Ethyl Alcohol, Isopropyl Alcohol, Methacrylates, Ethyl Acetate	Nail polish and remover, colognes, perfumes, rubbing alcohol, hair spray
Tetrachlorethene(PERC) and Trichloroethene (TCE)	Dry cleaning liquid, spot removers, fabric/leather cleaners
d-limonene (citrus odour), a-pinene (pine odour), isoprene	Citrus (orange) oil or pine oil cleaners, solvents and some odour masking products
Tetrahydrofuran, Cyclohexane, Methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), Toluene, Acetone, Hexane, 1,1,1-Trichloroethane, Methyl-iso-butyl ketone (MIBK)	PVC cement and primer, various adhesives, contact cement, model cement
Methylene chloride, Toluene, older products may contain Carbon Tetrachloride	Paint stripper, adhesive (glue) removers
Methylene chloride, PERC, TCE, Toluene, Xylenes, Methyl ethyl ketone, 1,1,1-Trichloroethane	Degreasers, aerosol penetrating oils, brake cleaner, carburettor cleaner, commercial solvents, electronics cleaners, spray lubricants
1,4-Dichlorobenzene, Naphthalene	Moth balls, moth flakes, deodorisers, air fresheners
Freon (Trichlorofluoromethane, Dichlorodifluoromethane)	Refrigerant from air conditioners, freezers, refrigerators, dehumidifiers
Heptane, Butane, Pentane	Aerosol spray products for some paints, cosmetics, automotive products, leather treatments, pesticides
Formaldehyde	Upholstered furniture, carpets, plywood, pressed wood

Table 1. — Sources of VOCs from Industrial Sources

- PIDs need **regular maintenance** and calibration of the UV lamp, driver and detection circuit
- the cell also needs regular cleaning as dust and microplastics can increase condensation
- the calibration procedure is **expensive and complicated** and uses 10 ppm compressed isobutylene gas

E-NOSE technology uses a semiconducting material which is applied to a non-conducting substance (substrate) between two electrodes. The substrate is heated to a temperature (around 400 °C) at which the presence of the analyte gas can cause a reversible change in the conductivity of the semi-conducting material

- When no gas is present, oxygen is ionised onto the surface
- When molecules of the analyte gas are present, they replace the oxygen ions which in turn affects the conductivity
- This change is measured complex electronic circuits and is directly proportional to the concentration of the gas being measured



Figure 3. — Oil in water pollution

This makes the E-NOSE a **broadband VOC detector technology** as any suitable molecule will interact with the semiconductor surface. An example of an instrument using this type of sensor technology is the MS1200 VOC monitor.

This method has the advantages of:

- High sensitivity i.e. the monitor can detect **VOC concentration levels down to 1 ppb**
- Sensors have a long life and do not require cleaning.
- There are 2 filter materials used in the monitor, a dust filter and activated carbon. These are the only consumables used in the system and only need replacing every 6 months
- Due to the robustness of the sensor technology the monitors can be deployed as an **online monitoring system** giving 24/7 detection and accurate measurement

A **validation procedure** has been developed; this method introduces a 200 ppb toluene in water solution, the monitor then samples the air/toluene vapour mixture to check the response.

OPERATING PRINCIPLE OF THE MULTISENSOR SYSTEMS TVOC SENSOR

When semiconductor particles are heated in air at high temperature, oxygen is adsorbed onto the surface, trapping free electrons from within the semiconductor electronic band structure⁷.

These electrons are immobilized at the surface, creating an electron-depleted region known as the space charge layer (for an n-type semiconductor). The space charge layer can be explained as an upward band bending of the conduction band compared to the flat band scenario.

When reducing analyte molecules are present, or indeed any species that will carry out competitive adsorption on the surface of the semiconductor, the number of oxygen species present on the surface is decreased. This process liberates immobilized electrons back into the conduction band, reversing the band bending and in so doing decreasing the space charge layer. This leads to an increase in conductivity. The scale of the increase in conductivity will be directly proportional to the number of analyte molecules present at the surface.

7 N. Yamazoe and K. Shimanoe, "Basic approach to the transducer function of oxide semiconductor gas sensors," Sensors Actuators B Chem., vol. 160, no. 1, pp. 1352–1362, Dec. 2011, doi: 10.1016/j.snb.2011.09.075.

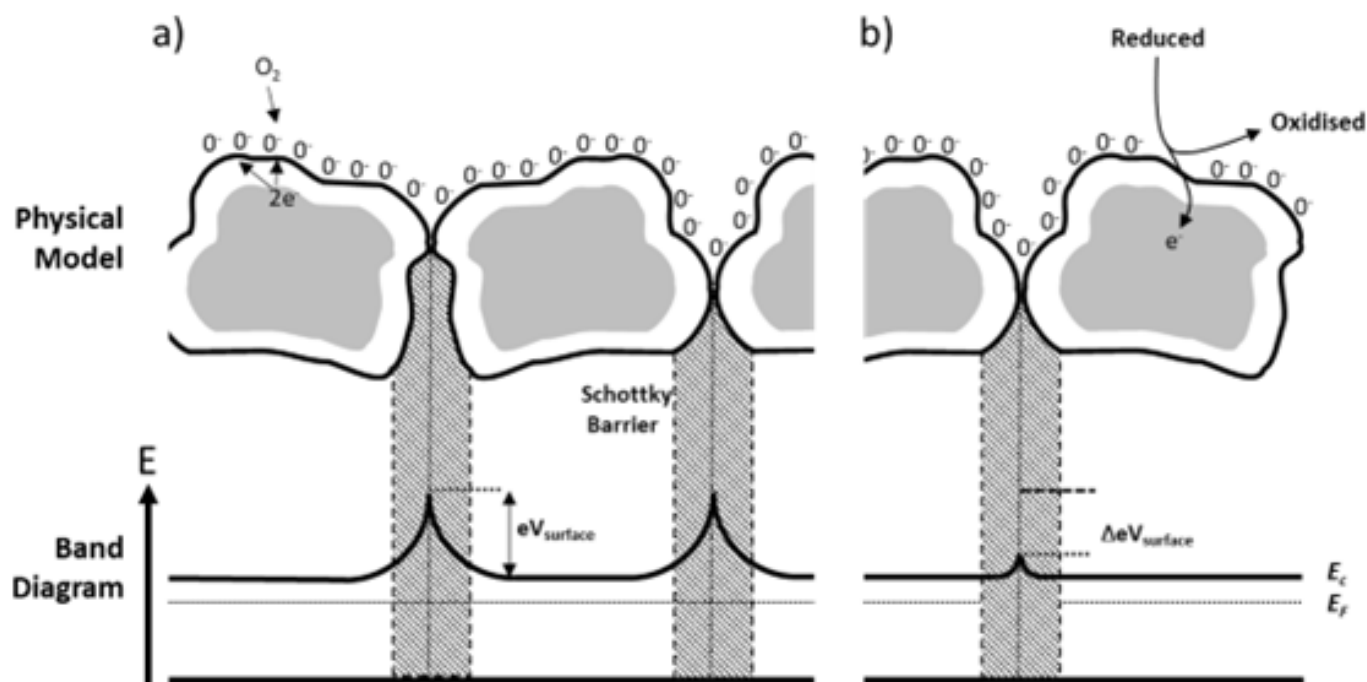


Figure 4. — a) Schematic showing the band diagram and physical model for a semiconductor heated in air; b) Schematic showing the same semiconductor exposed to a reducing analyte molecule which correspondingly increases the conductivity of the semiconductor.

Figure 4 shows schematically how the electronic band structure of the semiconductor changes when exposed to an analyte molecule as well as the generally accepted molecular model for this ionosorption theory (adapted from ⁸).

When an analyte molecule departs the surface, oxygen will re-adsorb and increase the band bending again, a process often referred to as recovery. The length of time for analyte molecules to desorb and the surface to recover to its initial state is dependent on a large number of factors. Similarly, the overall sensitivity of the sensor is determined by a range of complex properties and can be tuneable.

PUTTING EVERYTHING TOGETHER: MULTISENSOR SYSTEMS' APPROACH

The oil in water analyser was born by putting together the E-NOSE technology developed by Prof. Krishna Persaud, PhD, FRSC, FInstMC⁹, the semiconductor physics and Henry's Law of partial pressure.

The principle of operation is the measurement of **headspace gases** from a sample tank containing the water to be measured. Ideally, water flows through continuously to allow constant protection.

According to Henry's Law¹⁰, the concentration of gases in the headspace is proportional to the concentration of the substance in the water. Therefore, measurement of the headspace gases provides a technique to determine the concentration of contaminants in the sample water.

The MS1200 works by passing water through a sample tank as shown here. The **volatile components** in the water will pass into the headspace above the water and form an equilibrium.

The headspace gases are sampled continuously and passed over the sensors which respond to the Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in the headspace. This response is analyzed by the instrument and a **concentration value** is generated, based upon the relationship between the concentration present in the headspace and that in the water.

8 M. E. Franke, T. J. Koplin, and U. Simon, "Metal and Metal Oxide Nanoparticles in Chemiresistors: Does the Nanoscale Matter?," *Small*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 36–50, Jan. 2006, doi: 10.1002/smll.200500261.

9 Prof. Krishna Persaud is one of the directors of Multisensor Systems and the Chief Scientific Officer for the company. The first prototype was conceived in the early 2000s' to help a UK water company to protect its activated carbon filters from pollution events.

10 Image from: <https://equilibriumthermodynamics.weebly.com/henrys-law.html>

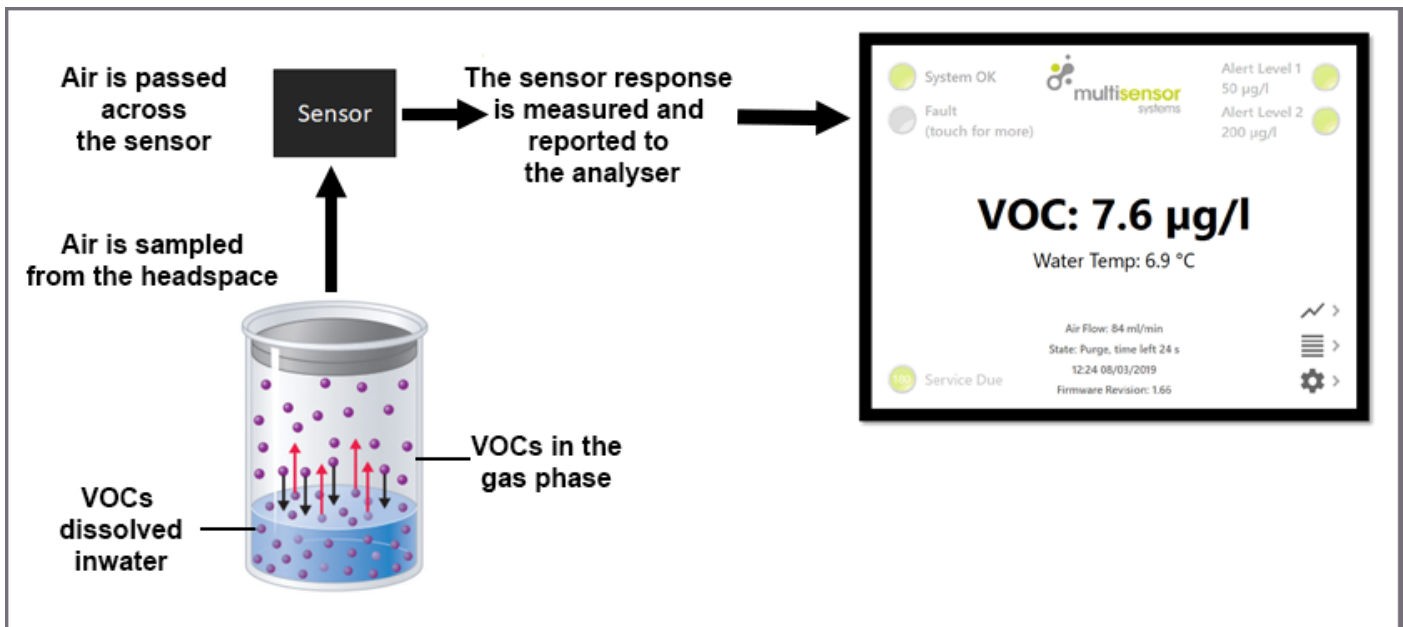


Figure 5. — Representation of the headspace sampling system

Thanks to this system, it is possible to rapidly determine when a contamination event occurs and allow the user to take appropriate actions to protect the process, the filters and the assets and **keep operations running smoothly**.

The MS1200 is now installed in hundreds of sites across the UK and the world and is helping protect WTPs from pollution events on a daily basis. After installing the first unit and seeing the benefits, many water companies have returned to purchase further instruments to protect their vital water intakes typically starting with areas at highest risk.

MS1200: AN ONLINE OIL IN WATER ANALYSER

The following table summarizes some of the most important specifications of the MS1200 (as of April 2020). To see the most up to date version, please refer to the following link:

<https://www.multisensorsystems.com/ms-products/oil-in-water-analyzer/>

Given the remote locations of many water abstraction points, the MS1200 was designed to be very robust, require little maintenance, both in terms of spare parts and service, and to be extremely reliable.

Installation is a very straightforward process: the instrument requires a connection to a pow-

er source, the water source and to waste. It is supplied mounted on two panels and should be bolted directly to a wall or onto a frame.

Validation of systems in the field is achieved using the Multisensor **Validation Kit** which presents a standard concentration to the instrument.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PARAMETER	OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS		NOTES
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	
DETECTION RANGE	1 ppb	3000 ppb	
DISPLAY RANGE (DEFAULT)	0 ppb	1000 ppb	Configurable on commissioning
REPEATABILITY	-2%	+2%	See Note 1
ACCURACY	-10%	+10%	See Note 1
MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY	Continuous		15, 20, 30, 60 minutes modes available on request
AMBIENT TEMPERATURE	0 °C / 32 °F	40 °C / 104 °F	See Note 2
WATER TEMPERATURE	1 °C / 34 °F	40 °C / 104 °F	See Note 2
ANALOG OUTPUT	4 mA	20 mA	Scalable to range required, max load 900 Ω
ANALOG OUTPUT ISOLATION	400 V DC		
RELAY VOLTAGE		50 V	3x: Alarm 1, Alarm 2 and Fault Relays with NO and NC contacts
RELAY CURRENT		5 A	
SERVICE INTERFACE	USB-A to PC		Using Multisensor Software provided for non touchscreen version
DATA STORAGE	μSD Card		6 months
INSTRUMENT CASE	IP65 / NEMA 4X		Coated Mild Steel
INSTRUMENT WEIGHT	16 kg / 35 lbs		
SAMPLING CHAMBER MATERIAL	Stainless Steel		Optional: PVC
SAMPLING SYSTEM WEIGHT	12 kg / 26 lbs		Without water
SAMPLING SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	570 x 490 mm 22 x 19 inches		
SAMPLING SYSTEM CAPACITY	3 litres / 0.79 US Gallons		
FLOW LIMIT SWITCH	Contacts closed if flow below set point		Option available on request
WATER FLOW RATE	2 l/min / 0.52 US gpm		
SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	1170 x 490 x 300 mm 46 x 19.2 x 11.8 inches		Mounted on 2 separate PVC backboards
SUPPLY VOLTAGE	90 V AC	240 V AC	50 Hz or 60 Hz
POWER CONSUMPTION: STANDARD VERSION TOUCH SCREEN VERSION		15 W 45 W	Typical 10 W during operation Typical 20 W during operation

NOTE 1: +/-10% from 30 to 3000 ppb, calibrated against NIST traceable toluene gas standards under Standard Laboratory Conditions; accuracy can be further improved at points of interest, using bespoke calibration. **NOTE 2:** Climate control might be needed depending on process and ambient conditions

CONSUMABLES

6 Months: Filters, Restrictor
As required: Air Pump, usually every 18-36 months

SERVICE

Service is necessary every 6 months to keep the instrument operating in optimal conditions. Service should be carried out by a trained technician who has undergone the standard Multisensor Systems training course.



Field Data Laboratory Tests External Testing

In the following pages we report data and graphs coming from various sites, laboratories and tests performed over the course of several years by Multisensor Systems Ltd.

This data was last updated in June 2021



FIELD DATA

Throughout the years, Multisensor Systems has developed a rich body of knowledge not only in the development of oil in water monitors but also in the understanding of the dynamics, levels and characteristics of different water intakes.

In the example below we can see what the data from a river monitoring MS1200 looks like. This comes from an instrument installed at a river intake that feeds into a water treatment plant.

Most of the time the system will read around 10 ppb that in this specific application can be defined as “background noise”. A month after this instrument is installed, we see a high-level alarm (higher than 60 ppb) and a low-level alarm (higher than 30 ppb) have been triggered. These sharp peaks in pollution would be impossible to detect with standard GCMS sampling methods. The next graph comes from a UK site where the

WTP takes its water from a well which is usually very clean.

As we can see at the beginning, the readings are at around 0 ppb but start to increase until the pumps are switched off and water from the well is not used anymore. After extensive investigation, this message was sent by the WTP:

“I can now confirm that our last two rounds of sampling on Well 4 have come back clear of Hydrocarbons. We have however had something come through on the GCMS samples collected on the Tuesday of the site visit.

Both the sample from the Well 4 sample tap and the sample collected from the outlet of the Hydrocarbon monitor came back with large peaks of what appear to be 4-chloro-2-methylbutanol and 2-methyl-4-bromobutanol, which I’m told are solvents. I have asked for further information on the concentrations, but I am yet to receive this information. Unfortunately, the laboratory have a

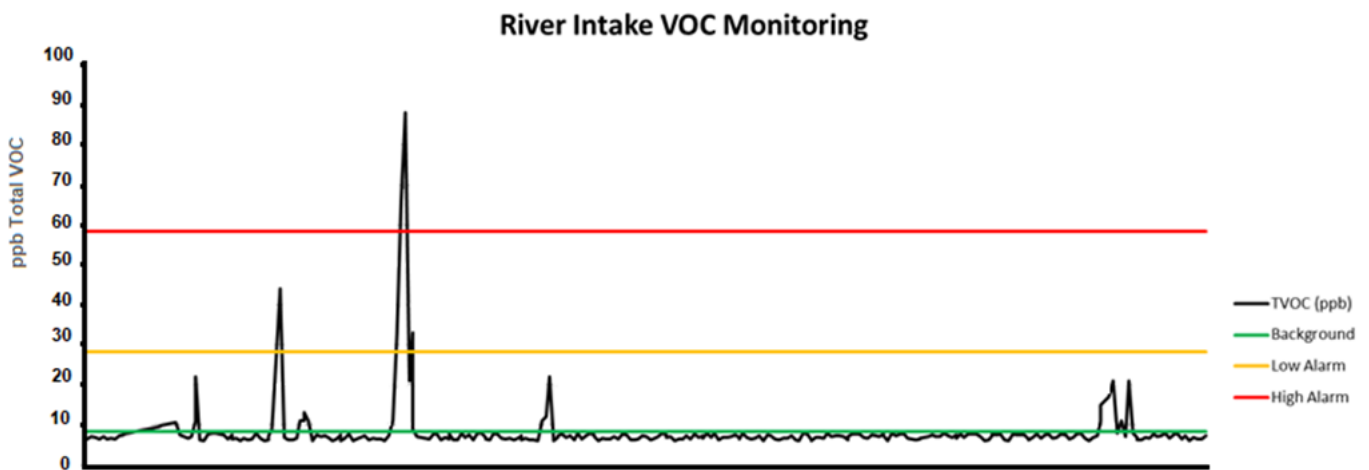


Figure 6. — TVOC levels at a water intake over a long period

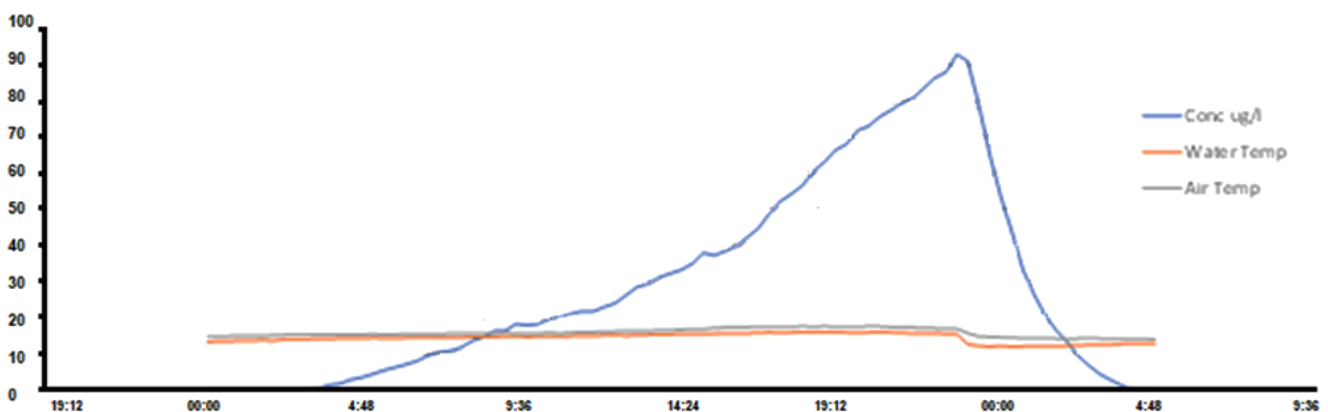


Figure 7. — Pollution event detected in a borehole

UKAS audit this week and so getting information is a little delayed. I am heading to site later this morning to investigate a possible source."

From this example we can see why a Total VOC system to detect pollution event makes sense at water abstraction points. Neither of the compounds would have been on the standard GCMS tests for water abstraction points, these concentration spikes would have therefore been missed and these compounds would likely have persisted through into the customer's drinking water.

LABORATORY TESTS

While data from the field is important to understand how the instrument performs in real-life conditions, it is often quite difficult to test for specific substances or conditions in the field, that's why we have carried out a number of tests.

All these test show that the system reacts to a huge number of different compounds and also

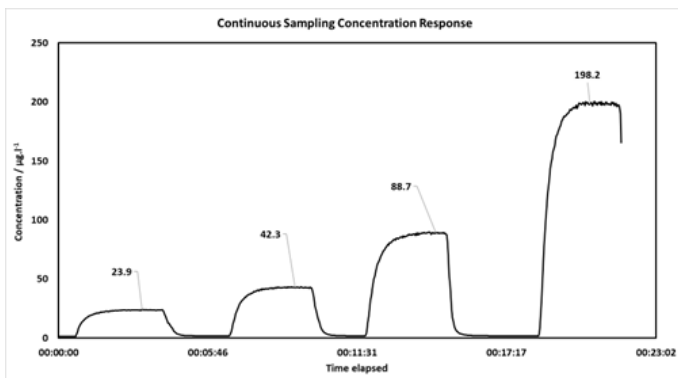


Figure 8. — Response speed - continuous mode

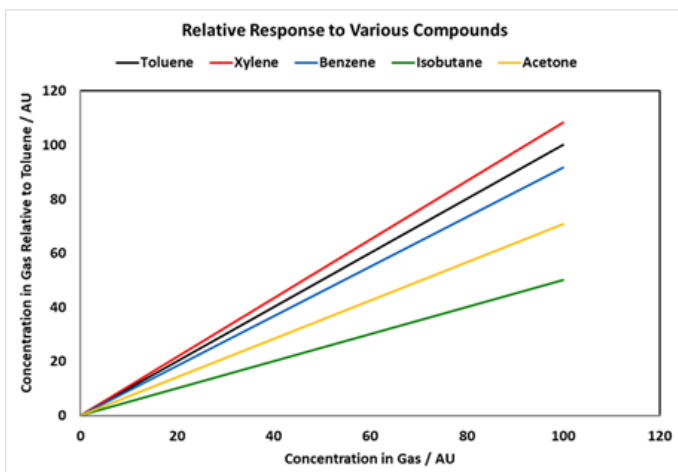


Figure 9. — Response to various compounds

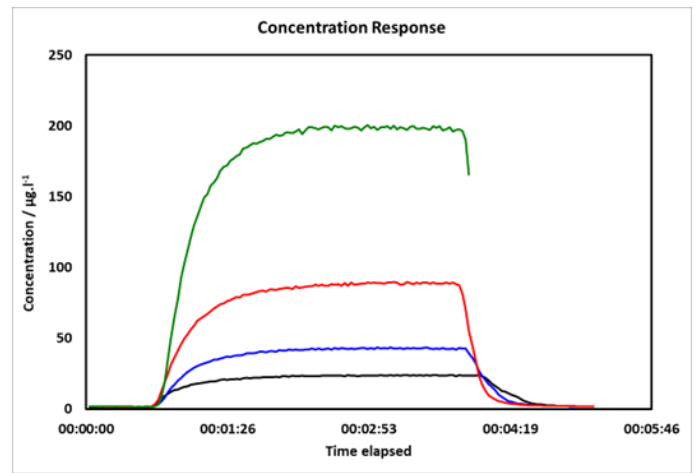


Figure 10. — Response to various concentrations

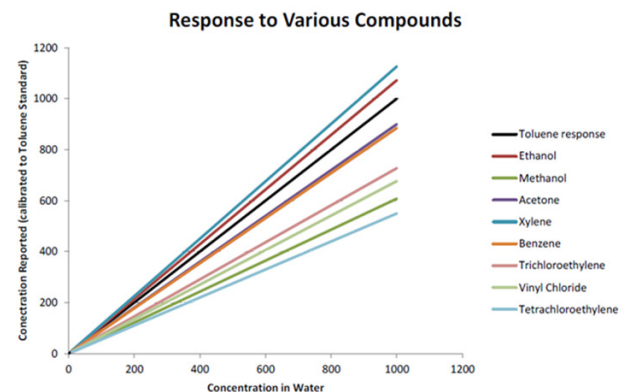


Figure 11. — Response to more compounds

responds extremely quickly. Water intakes can be placed very near or very far from a WTP. This means water can take from only a few minutes up to many hours to get into a WTP, depending on the specific circumstances.

Moreover, in some places the regulations will require discrete analysis versus continuous analysis.

All this means that the ability to provide different sampling periods is essential: in some cases, the operator needs a continuous sampling and a very fast response, in some other cases what's needed is a measurement every 15, 30 or even 60 minutes.

The MS1200 can be configured to several different sampling times to accommodate the requirements of the industry.

INDEPENDENT TESTING

The MS1200 has also been tested by a number of independent organisations. The most recent tests at the date of writing (April 2020) have been carried out by the National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food of Slovenia in March 2020. An excerpt from the report on this testing is included here.

REPORT ON MS1200 TESTING – MARCH 2020, SLOVENIA

Following the validation on the 4th March 2020, testing was carried out on the instrument in collaboration with the National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food in Slovenia. Bottles were prepared through a jointly agreed methodology and measurements of identical samples were measured on the MS1200-01-000195 instrument on site and on a GCMS at the National Laboratory.

The measurements of the MS1200 recorded on site were as can be observed in Table 3.

These results compared favourably with the laboratory GCMS results which were reported in Table 4.

These results confirm that the MS1200 measures and reports the concentration of toluene in water accurately under the conditions of this test. These results further demonstrate that the instrument can accurately measure and report BTEX concentrations in water utilizing the same calibration under the conditions of this test.

The conditions used for these tests were comparable to real world measuring conditions and the bottle measurement method was a suitable analogue for the sampling tank measurements.

A plot of the results from this test emphasise the accuracy of the MS1200 as an online, robust measurement system compared to a GCMS at the nationally accredited government laboratory.

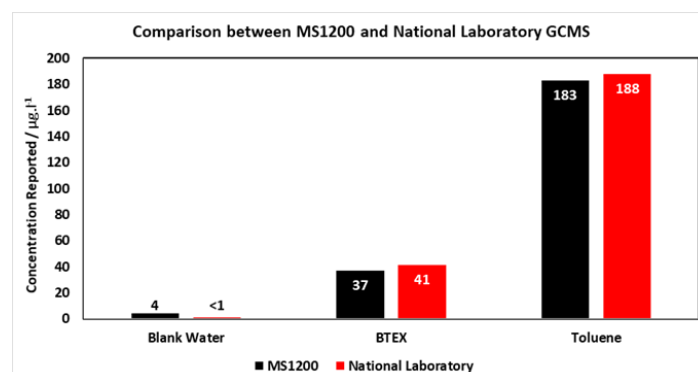


Figure 12. — Comparison between MS1200 and Laboratory Results

SAMPLE	REPORTED CONCENTRATION / MG.L ⁻¹	TEMPERATURE / °C
0 / Blank sample	4	15.05
50 µg.l ⁻¹ BTEX	37	14.53
200 µg.l ⁻¹ Toluene	183	14.45
50 µg.l ⁻¹ BTEX – repeat measurement	38	14.23
Tank measurement	8	10.36

Table 2. — Measurements were conducted with a 20-minute sampling interval at an airflow rate of approximately 84 ml.min⁻¹. The instrument was calibrated and validated for toluene using Multisensor's standard method.

SAMPLE	REPORTED CONCENTRATION / MG.L ⁻¹
0 / Blank sample	<1 µg.l ⁻¹
50 µg.l ⁻¹ BTEX	41 µg.l ⁻¹
200 µg.l ⁻¹ Toluene	188 µg.l ⁻¹

Table 3. — Measurements were conducted on a GCMS instrument (GC - Agilent 6890N, MS - Agilent 5975). Separation was performed on a capillary column (Agilent J&W DB - 624 UI capillary column; 121-1324; 20m x 180 µm x 1µm). The SIM technique was used for the GCMS detection.

TESTED COMPOUNDS

A comprehensive list of the Total VOC is not practical, however, these are some of the compounds that have been specifically tested.

ABBREVIATIONS

MSL = Multisensor Laboratory or detectable

Case Study = Information provided by the customer

COMPOUND	TESTED	NOTES
Benzene	✓	Tested with national laboratory
Chlorobenzene	✓	Multisensor Laboratory (MSL)
Ethanol	✓	MSL
Acetone	✓	MSL
Vinyl Chloride	✓	MSL
Tetrachloroethylene	✓	MSL
Isobutane	✓	MSL
Dichlorobenzene	✓	MSL
Ethylbenzene	✓	Tested with national laboratory
Isopropanol	✓	MSL
Isopropylbenzene	✓	MSL
Naphthalene	✓	MSL
Styrene	✓	MSL
Toluene	✓	Multisensor Systems Standard
Trimethylbenzene	✓	MSL
Xylene	✓	Tested with national laboratory
Chloroform	✓	MSL
Methanol	✓	MSL
Trichloroethane	✓	MSL
Trichloroethylene	✓	MSL
4-chloro-2-methylbutanol	✓	Case Study
2-methyl-4-bromobutanol	✓	Case Study
Range of solvents	✓	MSL
Penetrating Oils	✓	MSL
BTEX mixture	✓	Tested with national laboratory
Diesel	✓	MSL
Petrol	✓	MSL
Alcohols	✓	MSL
n-Heptane	✓	MSL
Formaldehyde	✓	MSL
Acetaldehyde	✓	MSL
Acetic acid	✓	MSL
Propanoic acid	✓	MSL
Trimethylamine	✓	MSL
Methyl Mercaptan	✓	MSL
Methane	✓	MSL

Table 4. — A non-comprehensive list of VOCs that will be detected by the MS1200

Case studies

For a collection of the latest case studies please visit:
<https://www.multisensorsystems.com/ms-casestudies/>

How the MS1200 Oil in Water Analyzer Works in the Field

This data was last updated in June 2021



CASE 1: MONITORING OF RIVER WATER INTAKE FOR PETROLEUM CONTAMINANTS

SECTOR

Clean Water

APPLICATION:

Monitoring of river water intake to detect hydrocarbons contamination from accidental spill

CUSTOMER

Water Company, North of England

INSTALLATION DATE

2014



Figure 13. — A picture of the unit installed in the outbuilding. The unit is connected to a PLC that records the data and, in case of an accident, triggers an alarm that switches off the intake pumps.

PROBLEM

In early 2013 there was an oil spill into the river from a local petrochemical plant. The water company that abstracts water from the same river was hit with high levels of hydrocarbons

and this led to a halt in the production and high costs due to the replacement of filters, pipes and cleaning operations.

PRODUCT

MS1200-01-SYS – Standard version, 4-20mA

INSTALLATION FACTS

The instrument is installed in an outbuilding at around 70 metres from the river from where the water is taken. Water is analysed for hydrocarbons and VOC every 15 minutes and, if there's an increased level, an alarm is triggered and action is taken.

Since the installation the system has protected the water plant on two occasions.

CASE 2: MONITORING OF RESERVOIR FEED FOR HYDROCARBON CONTAMINATION

SECTOR

Clean Water

APPLICATION

Monitoring of rural watercourse feeding a small reservoir to detect contamination from farm or food processing facilities.

CUSTOMER

Water Company, South of England

INSTALLATION DATE

2015

PROBLEM

Persistent small contamination events had put the reservoir which feeds a drinking water treatment plant at risk. Low level contamination preceded a large event in late 2016.

PRODUCT

MS1200-01-SYS – Standard version, 4-20mA with special tank for very high turbidity events.

INSTALLATION FACTS

The instrument is installed in an outbuilding and fed by a pump which is also used for other instrumentation. Water is analysed for hydrocarbons and VOC every 15 minutes and, if there's an increased level, the instrument closes a sluice

gate via the Alert relays, diverting the contaminated water until the event has passed.

The MS1200 saved the reservoir from serious contamination during a large event which resulted in an alternative source being piped to feed the reservoir.

CASE 3: MONITORING OF A BORE-HOLE TO DETECT POTENTIAL FUEL CONTAMINATION

SECTOR

Well Monitoring

APPLICATION

Monitoring a well after a diesel spill to ensure the aquifer is not contaminated

CUSTOMER

Water Company, England

INSTALLATION DATE

2017



Figure 14. — A picture of the unit installed in the out-building. The unit controls a sluice gate which diverts flow away from the reservoir in the event of contamination



Figure 15. — A picture of the unit installed in an out-building next to the well.

PROBLEM

The water company used a diesel power pump and this led to a spill in the ground. The company wants to ensure that the area has been properly isolated.

PRODUCT

MS1200-01-SYS – Standard version, 4-20mA and relay output

INSTALLATION FACTS

After the spill, the area was isolated with a barrier and the water company wanted to be sure that no diesel had reached the aquifer. A few months after the installation, the system started to give high readings of VOCs, however, no diesel was found. After extensive research, two specific solvents were identified in the aquifer. An investigation is currently underway to find the source of the contamination. The water from this aquifer is no longer used to supply the water plant and the company has avoided sending contaminated water into its network.

CASE 4: MONITORING A HIGH IRON AND MANGANESE CONTENT WELL FOR HYDROCARBONS

SECTOR

Drinking Water

APPLICATION

Monitoring a well for contamination from a known petroleum spill

CUSTOMER

Water Company, UK

INSTALLATION DATE

2014

PROBLEM

The customer wished to monitor hydrocarbon levels in a well for drinking water. The customer had attempted to use a UV based system but found that the system would only last a matter of a few days before ferric and manganese deposits stopped the system from functioning

PRODUCT

MS1200-01-SYS – Standard version, 4-20mA

INSTALLATION FACTS

The instrument was installed at the head of the well. Hydrocarbon levels less than 10ppb were present. The system was verified with Diesel Concentrations of 6 and 18 ppb were used to

validate the operation on-site. The system has operated without failure since installation, showing the system to be immune from the effects of high iron and manganese content water.



Figure 16. – MS1200 installed in 2014

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This document has explored the main reasons for protecting water sources and water intakes against pollution events, both in terms of ensuring high water quality to the population and to protect WTPs from high costs and damage. Measuring the Total VOC content of water has been shown to be an excellent method to monitor for a wide variety of pollution events and a number of technologies that can detect VOCs have been discussed.

The MS1200 Total VOC monitor and its electronic nose technology have been shown to be superior for high-accuracy broadband detection of VOCs in water. Finally, a series of case studies and examples have shown that the robust online measurements of TVOCs provided by the MS1200 have not only held up against national laboratory tests but saved WTPs from millions of dollars of damage over the years.

Multisensor Systems Ltd. always strives to provide the best solutions and the best technologies for the detection of contaminants in water.

If you have any question or a specific application that you want to discuss, we are here to help so please feel free to get in touch.



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Multisensor Systems is a developer and supplier of Water and Gas Analyzers specialising in oil in water, hydrocarbon analyzers, oil in water detectors, THM Analyzers and Ammonia Analyzers based in the United Kingdom.

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CHANGELOG**MSS DOCUMENT CHANGE RECORD**

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