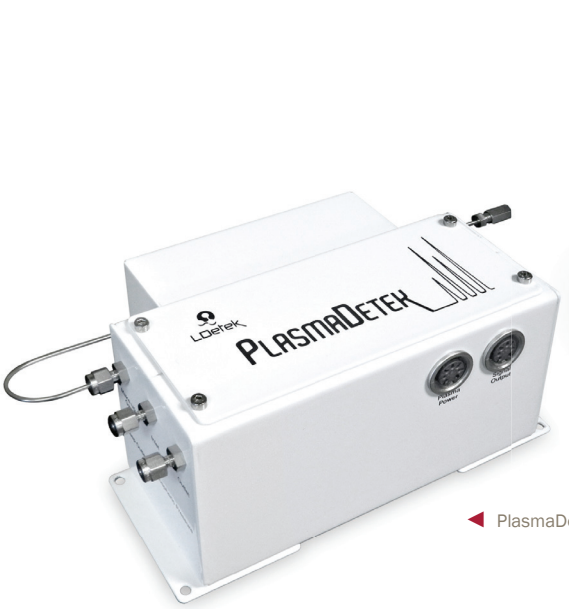
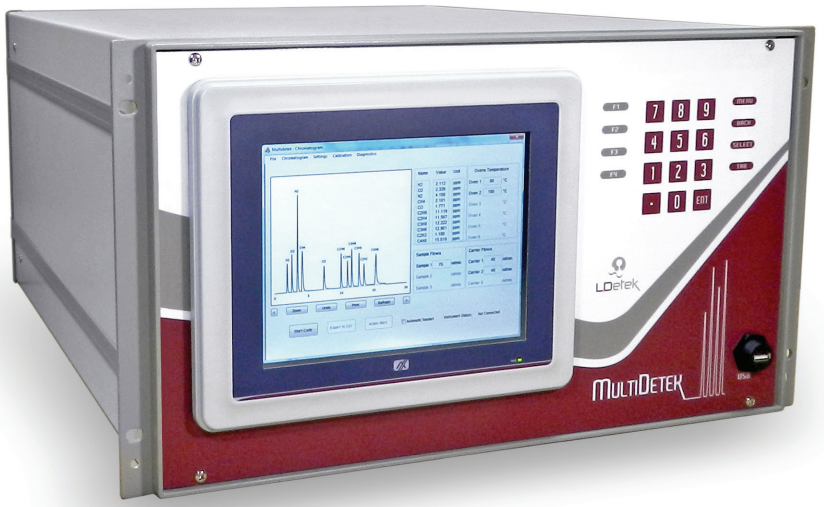
APPLICATION NOTE

LD13-01

Analysis of UHP Hydrogen production using Plasmadetek-2 & compact GC Multidetek-2



◀ PlasmaDetek-2



▲ Multidetek-2

The high purity hydrogen production demand is rising quickly and the need of measuring low ppb trace in a quick analysis run is then required. Most of the GC technologies available on the market use the same methods for years which required quite complex systems. Those systems require the use of different detectors to cover the application and a complex chromatograph configuration what make the price of such system increasing. The complexity of the chromatograph operations, the long analysis time and the limitations to achieve low ppb measurement are often faced.

THE SOLUTION:

With its integrated plasma technology, The MultiDetek-2 from LDetek becomes the ideal tool to measure the hydrogen purity. Its capability to monitor the permanent gases and hydrocarbons from ppb level up to high ppm level using only one plasma detector gives the ideal solution. In comparison to the existing method, the PlasmaDetek-2 gives the advantage of being selective to the desired impurities and then block the interference coming from the matrix gas. In the case of UHP hydrogen production, measuring low ppb traces of O_2 and N_2 is complex since their elution time is very close to the hydrogen matrix.

Then, to allow the analysis of O_2 and N_2, relatively long molecular sieve columns are required in combination with multiple valves for flushing out the hydrogen gas. In some cases, a hydrogen trapping module may be necessary. It then increases the cost of the system and extends the analysis time. Peaks shape can be also affected with the use of longer columns.

With the PlasmaDetek-2, a simple system having one valve and one Molecular Sieve column is required. The detector is configured with two sensors to measure O_2 and N_2 respectively in selective mode. Refer to Figure 1 for the configuration drawing. Going this way, the analysis time can be reduced, the sensitivity increased and it gives an easy to use system with no consumable or maintenance required.

An analysis example of impurities O_2 & N_2 in a hydrogen sample, using a standard ionization detector in combination with the same configuration that appears on Figure 1, has been used to generate the chromatogram that appears on Figure 2. We can clearly see the interference of the hydrogen over the traces O_2 and N_2. The hydrogen matrix interference overlaping the traces O_2-N_2 will be amplified when going lower at low ppb level and it will becomes not possible to measure the impurities without using another techniques requiring more long columns, additional valves and H_2 trap.

At the opposite, on Figure 3 appears a chromatogram of traces O_2 and N_2 with the use of the PlasmaDetek-2 using its selective mode. It is clearly demonstrated that the selectivity gives an important benefit that makes such type of analysis possible with a simplified chromatography method demonstrated on Figure 1.

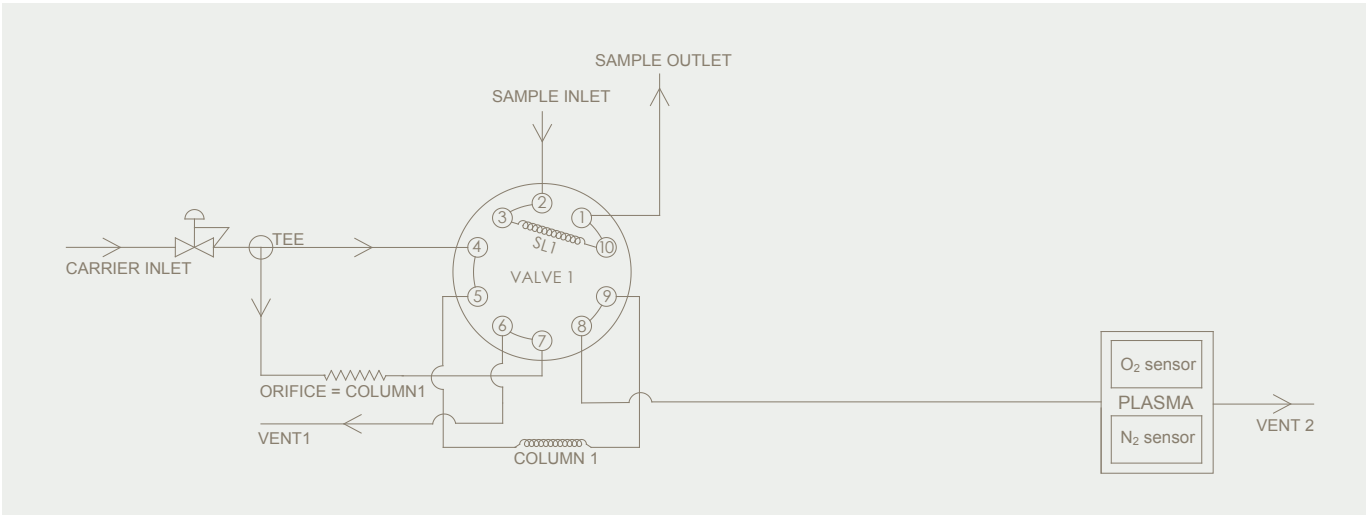


Figure 1 : Configuration used for measuring traces O_2 - N_2 in matrix hydrogen.
(One additional non selective sensor can be added to the same plasma for measuring traces CH4 - CO with the same channel.)

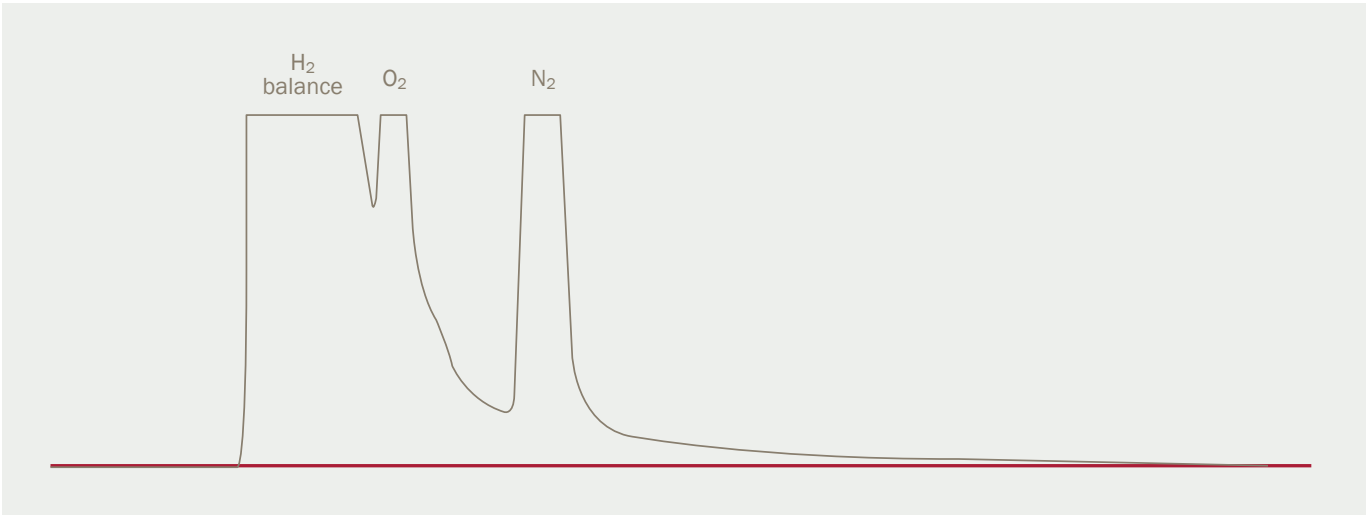


Figure 2 : Chromatogram of traces O_2 - N_2 in a hydrogen matrix using a conventional non selective ionization detector.

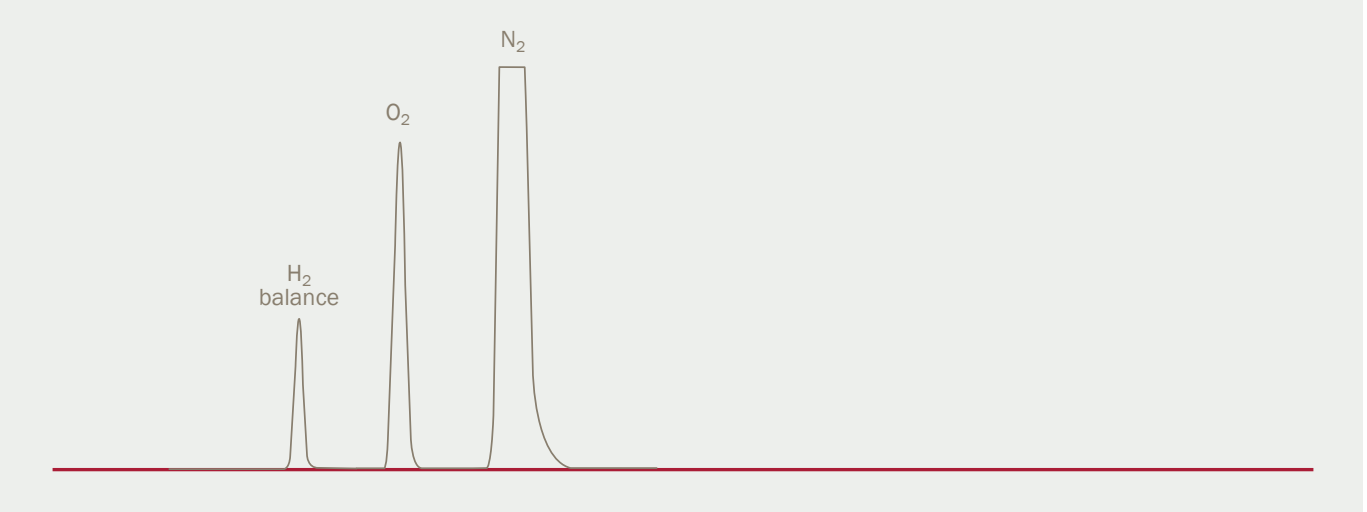


Figure 3 : Chromatogram of traces O_2 - N_2 in a hydrogen matrix using PlasmaDetek-2 in a selective mode.

ARGON AS CARRIER GAS:

Since the PlasmaDetek-2 can be used with argon as carrier gas, you get some more advantages over conventional ionization detector.

Operation cost of the system is reduced compared to system that requires helium. With the helium shortage worldwide and its price increasing constantly, the use of argon becomes the best alternative to keep same sensitivity level.

Furthermore, in the case when argon as impurity is not required, the use of argon as carrier gas simplifies the chromatography. With conventional ionization detector using helium, the Ar will interfere with O_2 measurement. If Ar measurement is needed, the PlasmaDetek-2 can also be used and configured accordingly to get Ar and O_2 separately (see application note LD12-3).

COMPLETE SOLUTION:

Using the PlasmaDetek-2 as detector and the MultiDetek-2 as compact GC platform, the same instrument can be used to measure additional components in hydrogen matrix.

The analysis of traces Ar-Ne-CH4-CO-CO_2 and hydrocarbons can be added to the same instrument just by configuring additional channels to the compact GC MultiDetek-2. Some other sensors can be added to the same plasma for the added impurities. No needs of additional detectors like FID or consumables are required.

CONCLUSION:

The pay back of such analytical tool is fast. It requires only argon as carrier gas which is available at low cost on any air separation plant. The PlasmaDetek-2 used in the MultiDetek-2 is maintenance free and is a clean detector. It requires no cleaning procedure. The compact GC MultiDetek-2 will operate for many years and gives optimal efficiency of any hydrogen production plant.

The combination of MultiDetek-2 compact GC with the PlasmaDetek-2 technology is a reliable, efficient and accurate system that any plant is looking for.

Where innovation leads to success

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