

EtherCAT Technology Group and OPC Foundation join forces to focus on common interfaces for Industrie 4.0 and IoT

The EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) and the OPC Foundation to define common interfaces for Industrie 4.0 and the Internet of Things (IoT), as indicated by a Memorandum of Understanding signed at Hannover Messe 2015.

Both organizations agree that their technologies complement one another perfectly: EtherCAT as the real-time-capable Ethernet fieldbus for machine and plant controls, leveraging the EtherCAT Automation Protocol (EAP) for lean data exchange between masters, and OPC UA as a platform for scalable communication with integrated Security by Design, enabling encrypted data transfer up to MES/ERP systems and into the cloud.

Industrie 4.0 and IoT demand seamless and continuous communication through all layers and levels within the digital factory, as well as externally through cloud-based services and other Internet technologies. The ETG and the OPC Foundation seek to achieve these requirements with the common definition of open interfaces between both of their technologies.

For this reason, the organizations agreed, in the frame of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to develop these interfaces in close cooperation, rather than focusing on their own technology extensions into the core area of the other.

Martin Rostan, Executive Director of the EtherCAT Technology Group, and Thomas J. Burke, President and Executive Director of the OPC Foundation, signed the MoU at the Hannover Messe 2015 trade show.

“With this agreement, we create the prerequisites to integrate EtherCAT systems consistently into Industrie 4.0 and IoT architectures. Within the ETG Technical Committee, we decided in October 2014 that OPC UA is our choice for the connection with cloud systems and the IT world. Development thus far has proved this to be the correct choice, and we look forward to collaborating in the creation of mutually-beneficial definitions of the common interfaces,” says Martin Rostan.

Thomas Burke adds: “EtherCAT is one of the leading technologies on the field level and provides an ideal complement to our functionality. OPC UA is not a competitor of fieldbuses; it seeks to enable the consistent, safe, and scalable communication of such systems into the IT world. Thanks to the common development of interfaces between both our associations, we expect quick and practice-oriented results which, of course, we will all welcome.”

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About EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG):

The EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) is an association in which key user companies from various industries and leading automation suppliers join forces to support, promote and advance the EtherCAT technology. With over 3100 members from 58 countries the EtherCAT Technology Group has become the largest fieldbus organization in the world. Founded in November 2003, it is also the fastest growing association of its kind.

About EtherCAT®:

EtherCAT is the fastest Industrial Ethernet technology and stands for high-performance, low-cost, ease of use and a flexible topology. It was introduced in 2003 and became an international standard and a SEMI standard in 2007. The EtherCAT Technology Group promotes EtherCAT and is responsible for its continued development. EtherCAT is also an open technology: anyone is allowed to implement or use it.

➔ For further information please visit: www.ethercat.org

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