Press Release

User and manufacturer association launched with more than 30 member companies

EtherCAT Technology Group established

EtherCAT is the Ethernet solution for industrial automation, characterised by outstanding performance and particularly simple handling. EtherCAT was developed by Beckhoff and presented for the first time at the 2003 Hanover Fair.

The basic development of EtherCAT (Ethernet for control and automation technology) is now largely completed, and the practical benefits have been demonstrated in initial pilot applications. The first EtherCAT devices are already being used in applications that cannot be realised with conventional fieldbus systems - and not with any other real-time Ethernet approach either.

The establishment of the EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) now heralds the second phase: disclosure. Everyone should be able to use and implement EtherCAT. The EtherCAT Technology Group promotes this philosophy. The ETG is a forum for end users from various industries, and for machine manufacturers and suppliers of advanced control technology with the aim of supporting and promoting EtherCAT technology.

The ETG users from different sectors ensure that EtherCAT is optimally prepared for a wide range of applications. With their qualified feedback, the system partners ensure simple integration of the hardware and software components in all required device classes.

"The integration of key customers in the development of new technologies at an early stage is tradition in our company", said Hans Beckhoff, general manager of Beckhoff. "This was already tried and tested with our Lightbus, first introduced in 1989. It meant that the network was particularly fast and simple to configure right from the start and had excellent diagnostic features. With EtherCAT, we have transferred the basic principles of the Lightbus to Ethernet technology, thus creating by far the fastest Industrial Ethernet currently on the market." Hans Beckhoff stresses the benefits of disclosure for his company: "In all three of product areas our company is involved with - fieldbus technology, Industrial PCs and control software - we have consistently used open interfaces and

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open systems right from the start. This approach has so far been well received and is very successful. It therefore made sense to follow the same approach with EtherCAT."

Within only three weeks, more than 30 member companies could be attracted to the EtherCAT Technology Group. Well-known machine and device manufacturers have recognised the benefits of EtherCAT and are contributing to the ETG.

Due to the optimal utilisation of the Ethernet bandwidth, even small data quantities can be transferred efficiently with EtherCAT. This results in extremely short cycle times and high transfer capacity. EtherCAT enables 1000 distributed digital I/Os to be queried within 30 µs - with read and write access in full duplex mode. 200 analog values take 50 µs, 100 axes can be controlled in 100 µs. Naturally, EtherCAT is particularly suitable for fast PC-based control technology. The master requires no special plug-in card and can be implemented on any existing Ethernet controller using a very simple interface. EtherCAT is therefore also well suited to small and medium control technology, where it will also open up new areas of application for distributed I/Os.

For further information see: **www.ethercat.org**

Please send readers' questions to:
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EtherCAT Technology Group Members

1. Andrive Antriebstechnik GmbH
2. Applied Materials Inc.
3. Aradex AG
4. Baldor UK Ltd
5. Baumüller Electronic GmbH + Co. KG
6. Beckhoff
7. Bruderer AG
8. Continental AG
9. Danaher Motion GmbH
10. Dieffenbacher GmbH & Co.
11. DLR e.V., Institut für Robotik und Systemdynamik
12. Finn-Power Oy
13. Focke & Co
14. Fraba Posital GmbH
15. Fronius International GmbH
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19. IMA Automation GmbH
20. Imperial Tobacco Limited
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