

ETG 032004

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EtherCAT on the road to success

ETG members: "from zero to one hundred in less than 8 months"

EtherCAT, the real-time Ethernet technology for control applications developed by Beckhoff, is making headway at all levels: Basic development and technical testing were completed successfully in close cooperation with selected pilot customers, and the technology was presented and discussed in detail in the EtherCAT Technology Group. While several special protocol features - partially prompted by contributions from ETG members - are still being added, implementation from FPGA to ASIC has already started.

International standardisation of EtherCAT has also been initiated successfully. EtherCAT has become an established industrial Ethernet technology, and it is hard to imagine related symposia, conferences and workshops without this subject. This is also apparent from the numerous awards for EtherCAT over recent months. EtherCAT has attracted best new technology awards not only in German-speaking countries, but also in the USA, Sweden and Poland.

ETG membership reaches 100

On Friday, 26 June 2004, the 100th membership application form arrived by fax at the EtherCAT Technology Group head office. In the history of fieldbus organisations, the ETG thus had an exceptional start: from zero to one hundred in less than 8 months. But that's not all: Only a week later, ETG already had 105 members. But it is not only the number of member companies that is impressive, the worldwide distribution also speaks for itself. Currently, companies from the USA, Canada, China, Korea, Taiwan, Israel, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria and, naturally, Germany are represented in the ETG; enquiries from South America, Africa and Australia have been received.

"No doubt the number of members is not everything", Martin Rostan, ETG executive director, explained, "but it indicates the tremendous worldwide interest in EtherCAT. We are particularly pleased about the considerable number of participants at ETG events, which indicates that the members are indeed committed to EtherCAT and want to actively share this technology.

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It also shows that the members are satisfied with what the ETG has to offer. For us this is confirmation and incentive at the same time."

Meeting of the technical committee

"Pure technology" was the motto of the technical committee meeting held 5/6 May in Nuremberg/Germany. With 30 participants, the meeting - chaired by Dr. Dirk Janssen - was very well attended. Apart from technical discussions, the emphasis was on training. Beckhoff developers introduced the protocol, the implementation and the latest developments. During this phase, it is obvious that conveying information features prominently in technical meetings: After all, EtherCAT is no longer in the development phase, but is already largely implemented. Nevertheless, the discussion brought up interesting suggestions and aspects.

Implementation kick-off meeting

The „Implementation kick-off meeting“, held 6-8 July at Frankfurt/Germany, was aimed specifically at ETG members who want to implement EtherCAT in their automation components. With 60 participants from 35 manufacturing companies, this meeting was also very well attended. The meeting started with a one-day EtherCAT training session. On the second day, the implementation of EtherCAT slaves was explained and discussed. The third day focussed on the implementation of EtherCAT in master controllers.

➔ The complete list of ETG members can be found at
www.ethercat.org

Please send readers' questions to:

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