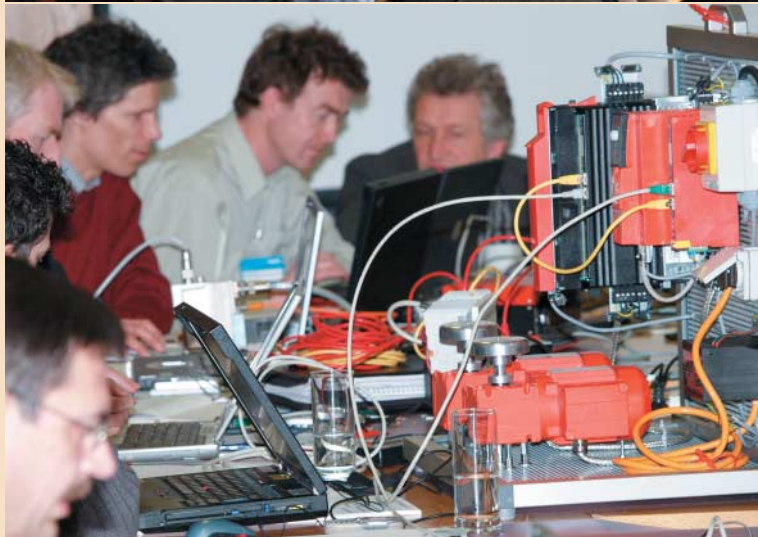
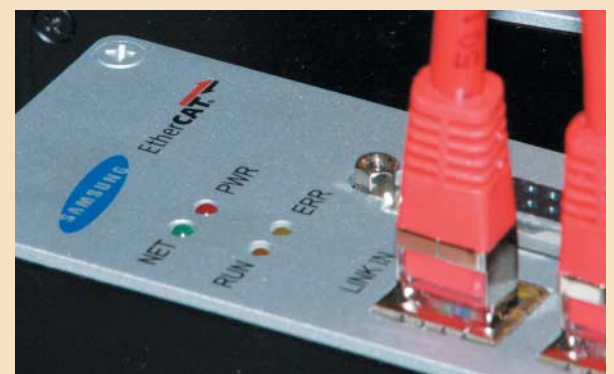


Inaugural EtherCAT Plugfest well attended



"A Plugfest is a kind of LAN party for developers," said one participant in an attempt to describe this event to his colleagues. Not a bad comparison, even though Plugfest doesn't focus on PC games, but on synergy between devices. The EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) held the first of these interoperability meetings at the end of January 2006 – 15 manufacturers offering a total of more than 50 different EtherCAT devices had followed the invitation. Groups of slave devices were commissioned in turn in four different master implementations. All devices could successfully be operated in a network within a short space of time.

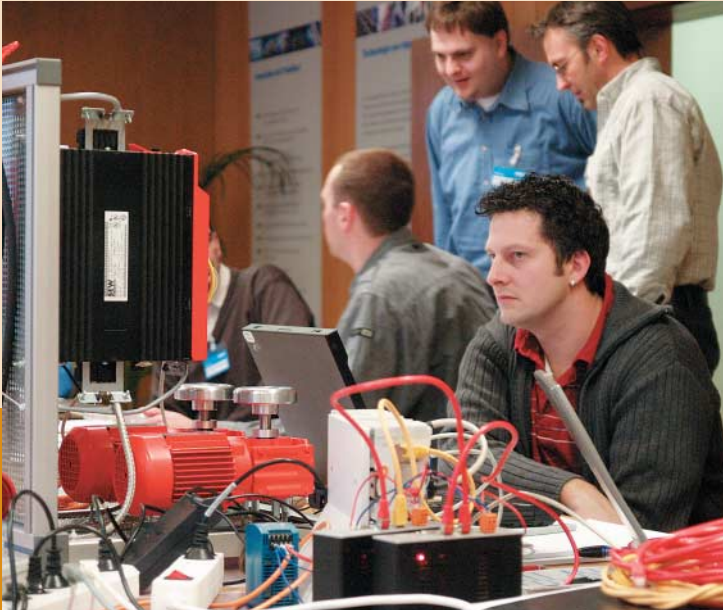
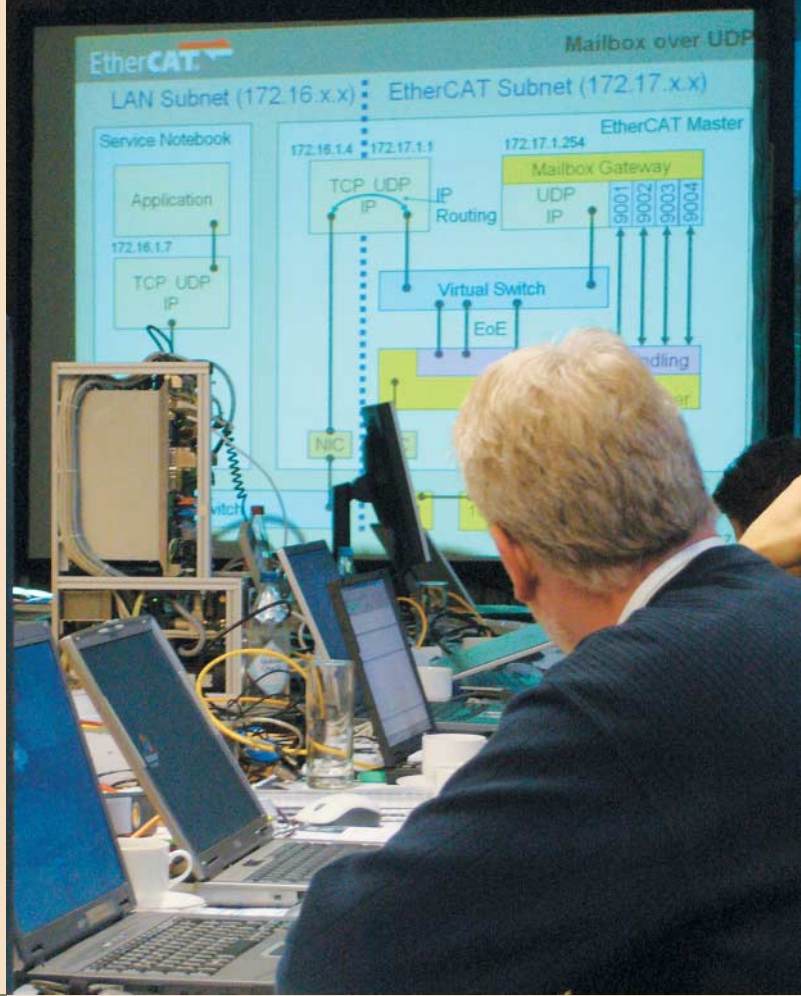
A special highlight was the demonstration of tool providing access to a running EtherCAT network from the notebook of the commissioning engineer via UPD/IP to the master, which provides transparent access to the device in the network. While drive control and I/O updates take place with very short cycle times via the EtherCAT sys-





tem, EtherCAT devices can be accessed from any point via configuration or diagnostic tools. Existing manufacturer tools can be connected to this interface quite easily. This EtherCAT feature will be demonstrated with several masters and tools at the EtherCAT Technology Group stand at this year's Hanover Fair (hall 9, stand F13).

Plugfests are no substitute for the official conformance tests currently being prepared by ETG, but they provide an excellent pragmatic interoperability and implementation test and offer developers valuable information and ideas. Devices that are ready to be tested at a Plugfest merit a high degree of confidence. Plugfests also contribute to the further development of specifications by enabling interpretation gaps to be detected and closed. The next EtherCAT Plugfest will take place on April 4/5.



EtherCAT in a nutshell

EtherCAT technology continues to spread rapidly around the world. Beckhoff is responding to this development by offering application-oriented training sessions for users and manufacturers. Current EtherCAT workshops focus on "EtherCAT Evaluation Kit", "Master Sample Code" and other topics. For further dates see www.ethercat.org.

EtherCAT training session at the Beckhoff headquarters in Germany with international participants from Switzerland, Liechtenstein, France, Israel, South Korea, Australia and other countries.