



Historic milestone for EtherCAT Technology Group: the 1000th member

With 1000 member companies joining in just over 5 years, the EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) is undoubtedly a dynamic organization powered by rapid growth. The 1000th member of the ETG is Multivac, a world leader in packaging machine technology with its headquarters in Bavaria, Germany.

The ETG was introduced to the world at a press conference in November 2003 and the group's Kick-off Meeting took place March 9 - 10, 2004. Since these early events, EtherCAT has not only become an international standard, but a globally accepted fieldbus technology with considerable market penetration. Today, the ETG has members in 45 countries, runs offices in Germany, the United States, China, Japan and Korea, and keeps its growing team of 15 quite busy. For two consecutive years, the ETG has grown by an average of one new member every business day. Near the beginning of the group's existence, 70% of members came from Germany; today, over 65% of the membership

hails from other countries. The second largest member group by country is the United States, closely followed by Japan, then China/Taiwan, Italy and Switzerland. In Asia alone, there are an impressive 220 member companies.

"Of course, we are extremely happy to have achieved this membership milestone so quickly," says Martin Rostan, Executive Director of the ETG. "I believe it is the highly compelling nature of the EtherCAT technology itself that caused this enormous interest. The story of this success is not told only by the number of members, but also the worldwide distribution and acceptance of the technology. EtherCAT has been firmly established both

with vendors and users and has been deployed successfully in a massive variety of applications."

Alois Allgaier, business unit manager for control engineering at Multivac, explains the decision to join the ETG: "EtherCAT provides a big step forward technologically. Our cycle times have been optimized and our machines are even more efficient and reliable today. Thanks to Safety over EtherCAT, we can also meet our functional safety requirements with the same base technology. So to Multivac, membership in the ETG is obvious. The effective structure of the ETG allows users to become involved and put forth our points of view in order to advance EtherCAT technology."



As the 1000th ETG member, Alois Allgaier, business unit manager for control engineering at Multivac, receives the membership certificate from Martin Rostan, Executive Director of the ETG.

EtherCAT Technology Group expands test tool to include CANopen Drive Profile

The ETG is expanding the organization's Conformance Test Tool to include the CANopen drive profile, CiA402. This step supports the consistent implementation of this profile and further facilitates the hassle-free commissioning of EtherCAT drives. The first version of the expanded test tool will be released in a few weeks.

The CANopen Profile, CiA402 is probably one of the most widely used drive profiles in the world. It is not only supported by European vendors, but also increasingly in Asia and North America. The profile, as well as its mapping on EtherCAT, is standardized in IEC 61800-7. It contains three modes for cyclic-synchronous motion control. These new modes were in-

roduced into the standard in 2005 by ETG members with EtherCAT in mind. They are the basis for the corresponding ETG implementation guideline, which was published in 2007.

The test tool enhancement checks the object dictionary entries and the state machines for conformance with the standard and helps to reduce the effort customers have to spend for commissioning drives. The working group conformance within the EtherCAT Technology Group is in charge of the EtherCAT test cases as well as the test enhancement to cover this device profile.

"The commissioning of EtherCAT communication itself is very simple. The application interface, which is specified by the device profile, sometimes needs more work – in particular with drives and especially if drives from different vendors are used. With the test tools extended to drive profiles we expect a further unification of implementations and even shorter commissioning times for our customers," says ETG board member Dr. Peter Heidrich, R&D manager drives at Baumüller.