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P R E S S R E L E A S E

IO-Link “Big Picture” is being completed step by step

Nuremberg, November 29, 2017: IO-Link is well received by the market. This is verified impressively by the annual statistics of IO-Link nodes installed in the field. The constantly growing number of members worldwide also speaks volumes. This is the incentive for the working groups within the IO-Link Community to continue working steadily and consistently on their vision: their “Big Picture.” Several of the pillars have been available for some time and form the foundation for the worldwide success of IO-Link so far. The IO-Link architecture and protocol stands out, due to characteristic features, such as openness with respect to all fieldbuses, simplicity, easy installation and parameterization and diagnosis options.

With the release of the IO-Link Safety System Extensions specification in April 2017, which was preceded by a successful TÜV concept review, an additional pillar for implementation in products is available to the IO-Link Community. The delivery of IO-Link Safety enables solutions up to SIL 3.

Like IO-Link, IO-Link Safety relies on fieldbus and system independence and takes full advantage of the resulting benefits. Finally, it is important for plant and machine manufacturers to have a standardized installation and device functionality at the sensor/actuator level, i.e. the IO-Link Device level, independent of the fieldbus system that is used. Now, the next steps are the formulation of a test specification and development of integration into existing fieldbus systems such as PROFINET.

The openness of IO-Link in terms of integration into any desired fieldbus systems is not only an additional “Big Picture” pillar for the success of IO-Link with a required maximum level of

flexibility to achieve uncomplicated integration of sensors and actuators. PROFINET has established itself in plants and machines because of high determinism and a large range of functions. The recently updated “IO-Link on PROFINET” guideline addresses seamless integration of IO-Link systems into PROFINET without obstructive system breaks. In short, the user experiences an IO-Link Device as an integral part of the PROFINET system.

One of the key factors in the success of IO-Link in recent years was undoubtedly the easy wiring of intelligent, complex sensors and actuators using a simple, standardized, three-core sensor cable. To dispense with even this easy wiring of communications cable in the IO-Link system in the future, the IO-Link Community is working on an additional “Big Picture” pillar: IO-Link wireless technology. The Marketing Working Group therefore initially worked on the requirements profile and formulated related use cases. Based on this, the technical specifications were defined in the appropriate Technology Working Group and the specification document was created. The specification is currently under review by every device manufacturer in the world and should be released at the beginning of 2018.

Industrie 4.0 requires data consistency from the sensor to the cloud. Because sensor data is the raw material for production plants in generation Industrie 4.0 and the much-discussed new business processes. For the IO-Link Community this topic is part of the vision. Today, experts are already creating the preconditions for this and consider it a fixed part of the “Big Picture.”



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