Press Release

New peak in process automation

System 800xA – an integration and information platform as stage towards “Industrie 4.0”

Hanover, April 7, 2014 – As announced in the run-up for this year’s Hanover Fair, ABB will present the latest version 6.0 of the process control system 800xA in spring. Daniel Huber, now Head of the Process Automation Division in Central Europe and formerly as head of development of 800xA. He directly links 800xA to the motif of “Industrie 4.0”: “Actually, System 800xA is not just a higher-level control system but an integration platform for various systems. At the same time, it serves as an information hub. Since integration and safe data availability play an essential role in the implementation of ‘Industrie 4.0’, our open System 800xA is the perfect starting point.”

From the ABB manager’s perspective, version 6.0 represents the temporary peak of a development which ABB already kicked off ten years ago with the “Industrial-IT” concept - a vision that has now come close to reality. Tobias Becker, Head of the global ABB Business Unit Control Products, has made the interesting observation that within the framework of the “Industrie 4.0” discussion other market participants have picked up on the idea of Industrial-IT. “ABB’s version 6.0 is strictly speaking ‘Industrial-IT reloaded’, says Mr. Becker alluding to ABB’s function as technology trailblazer.

Mr. Becker adds: “When we projected about ten years ago where process control technology would be heading, we envisioned a fusion of office environment, executive management, finance and accounting, and the actual process control technology. It became also clearly visible that merging the IT world with control technology would offer our customers tremendous additional value.”

This explains the term “extended automation”, which is included as “xA” in the product name. In practical terms this empowers the executive management, for instance, to directly influence the process by forwarding specified production requirements for individual batches directly to order processing. The other way round, diagnostic equipment data provides feedback on the condition or status of the equipment. This allows to assess whether maintenance measures have to be taken, which have to be considered in production planning”, explains Mr. Becker.

A high degree of integration, however, is often perceived as increased complexity, as Mr. Huber confirms. But at a second glance, 800xA integrates in one system what previously had to be run in parallel, e.g. power supply and the actual production automation. Moreover many procedures are integrated now, which had to be performed manually and coordinated between different functions. In total, less effort is required because according to Mr. Huber: “Where formerly two separate systems had to be configured, we now only need to configure one system with slightly more time and effort. Then it becomes clear that 1+1 do not make 2, but that the overall effort required shrinks.”

Essentially, there are three characteristics that make System 800xA particularly valuable and meet the high expectations of the German industry in production supervision and quality: it is solid, safe and efficient. “With the market launch of version 6.0, we have reached a new peak”, says Tobias Becker and adds: “During the late 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s, plant operators in the process industry complained about a lack of data. In recent years, they have nearly drowned in a flood of data.” Particularly in this respect, System 800xA offers numerous functionalities ensuring operator efficiency despite the enormous data load. “Depending on the individual situation, the operator can now focus on the relevant data, such as alarms. And we will continue to make every effort to direct the development towards “Industrie 4.0” into the right lane.”
ABB (www.abb.com) is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve their performance while lowering environmental impact. The ABB Group of companies operates in around 100 countries and employs about 150,000 people.

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