

S7 OPC Server and NETlink PRO - A case study

A few weeks ago a manufacturer of a wet chemical washing system contacted Softing's team of consultants. The manufacturer was in the process of developing a new, high performance washing system that takes economical and environmental requirements into account. The automated washer is controlled by an S7 PLC that is connected to a graphical operator station at a remote location.



The design team decided to use OPC as the communication interface between the S7 PLC and the operator station. A pure Siemens solution (Siemens OPC Server with WinCC) was ruled out for economical reasons and due to the small number of data points used in the operator station. The design engineers looked for an alternative, low-cost solution when they contacted Softing's team of consultants.

Softing recommended, among two alternative solutions, the following economical, yet powerful setup for the design team:

- Softing's S7 OPC Server with
- NETLink PRO/ETH; a compelling, Siemens compatible, Ethernet to PROFIBUS/MPI gateway that is powered by the native S7 MPI/PROFIBUS port.

Softing's S7 OPC Server offers the capability to import the symbolic names table of the STEP7 program; no need to manually define all name tags in the OPC Server. Access to the S7 controller is accomplished via Ethernet (e.g. NETLink PRO/ETH), PROFIBUS, USB, or a serial communication link. The integrated server-side OPC Tunnel guarantees a stable and secure data exchange between OPC Client and Server, even through firewalls.

In addition, Softing's S7 OPC offering includes an industrial ActiveX OPC Client control that encapsulates OPC related communications. Furthermore, the ActiveX control fits seamlessly into standard Microsoft software packages including Excel, Visual Basic, Microsoft Access, and Internet Explorer without additional runtime license fees. The scalable solution enables the engineering team to design a very cost-effective operator interface to control/configure multiple washers based on standard Microsoft applications.

Softing's expertise combined with a technically savvy design team produced multiple solutions that combine scalability and performance with the economical requirements necessary for a successful product.

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Industry

Manufacturing
- Industrial Automation
- Industrial Controls

Task / Objective

Develop economical and environmentally sound washing systems

Requirements

High-performing, yet economical solution to remotely access SIMATIC S7 PLCs

Solution

Softing S7 OPC Server with NETLink PRO Ethernet adapter

Benefits

Cost savings, highly scalable solution, robust and efficient data communication

Market segments

Chemical industry