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Deutschmann Automation introduces UNIGATE IC bus nodes

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May 26, 2010 - Today, manufacturers of drives and control components supply a market in which a large variety of communication systems exist. A manufacturer trying to consider even the most common fieldbuses and Industrial Ethernet systems must integrate interfaces for 10 to 15 different protocols. Developing proprietary interfaces, however, only makes sense where devices are manufactured in large quantities or where special designs require hardware integration into limited spaces.



UNIGATE IC all-in-one bus nodes from Deutschmann Automation present an economic alternative which allows for a flexible choice of the communication system and saves manufacturers a considerable amount of development effort. These miniaturized communication modules are available for all leading fieldbuses and Industrial Ethernet systems. They are continuously improved to meet evolving standards. The ready-to-install interfaces handle the complete communication on the bus side, thus significantly relieving the application's microprocessor. Unique in the market, Deutschmann's solution uses a script which implements the protocol of the terminal device; therefore, users do not need to adapt the device firmware. UNIGATE ICs are excellently suited for use with terminal devices in automation technology such as controllers, actuators, and sensors. On top of that, they can also be used to connect other control components (e.g. process analysis devices) to the respective fieldbus or Ethernet system. Featuring hardware and software interfaces with the same standardized functionalities, UNIGATE ICs enable the easy implementation of flexible multi-protocol solutions. The manufacturers merely need to integrate the adaptation board which holds a socket for UNIGATE ICs or implement a socket directly on the device board. The free-of-charge PC tool Protocol Developer for the script configuration ensures quick adaptation of the ICs to the specific application.

UNIGATE IC hardware and variants

UNIGATE ICs are available, among others, for Profibus DP, MPI, INTERBUS, DeviceNet, CANopen, LonWorks, Modbus TCP, Profinet, POWERLINK, EtherCAT, Ethernet/IP, and Ethernet TCP/IP. UNIGATE IC variants with RS232 or RS485 interfaces are available for RS-based protocols like Modbus RTU and Modbus ASCII. Measuring only 45 x 25 mm, the module in a 32DIL housing contains a microcontroller, Flash, RAM, a bus controller, and analog components, such as optocouplers. The UNIGATE IC is connected to the host processor either via a UART interface or via the synchronous serial interface in stand-alone operation.

Helpful interface between application and bus protocol

With a script which handles the communication between host processor and UNIGATE IC, applications become much more flexible. Users can write even complex protocols, buffer data, and process it in virtually any way. Specific programming skills are not required. The logically structured script is based on C++ and can easily be programmed using Deutschmann's free-of-charge Windows tool Protocol Developer. Since the compiled code only takes up a little share of their large memory, UNIGATE ICs can store even big scripts without any problems. Protocol Developer features a large number of functions which enable the comfortable and quick debugging even of very big scripts; these include breakpoint, single-stepping, and the display of variables, their values, or error messages. The context-sensitive help function provides detailed descriptions of all script commands.

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