Stewardship and Vision: The Continuous Evolution of Legacy Controllers

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"Honeywell is committed to delivering the longest lifecycle of any platform on the market, and we demonstrated that with 30 to 40 years of life on our TDC systems," Jason Urso, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Honeywell Process Solutions, told delegates at the Pacific HUG symposium in Fremantle.

Urso pledged long-term support for existing systems. Honeywell's Hiway Care program, for example, is designed for customer site needs and guarantees continued support up to 2020 or even later.

"That's nearly 50 years of life on Hiway equipment. Absolutely unprecedented in process control, and almost unprecedented in the world of electronics."

PM, LCN and FSC controllers are treated as current products "with no end-of-life date set", said Urso.

A long life remains for Hiway systems as well as LCN and FSC systems, but customers can choose to continuously evolve their systems in a step-by-step manner.

In 2004, for example, Honeywell introduced the Experion Station for TPS, giving customers the advantages of the Experion graphics layer on top of the TDC 3000 system.

"But we did so in a way that protects our customers intellectual property," said Urso. "What that meant was that we ran GUS graphics and native window graphics side by side with the Experion HMI. In fact you didn't need to design any Experion graphics at all, you could continue operating using GUS and native window the same way you always had in the past."

The next step available for plant managers was the introduction of the new control and I/O platform, C300 and Series C.

"With C300 and Series C, combined with the Experion Station for TPS, what we have is a single unified human interface across multiple generations of systems."

A new product to be introduced in mid-2012 is the EHPM, which is the traditional HPM controller with a new communications interface that allows the HPM to operate on a fault-tolerant Ethernet network instead of a UCN.

"To enable this to be possible we also had to make some similar changes on the NIM," said Urso. "So we'll have a complimentary offering called the ENIM. The ENIM will bridge LCN traffic to fault-tolerant Ethernet the same way the NIM bridges LCN to UCN."

In 2013 the C300 and the EHPM will be integrated using a peer-to-peer communication mechanism between both generations of systems.

In 2014 the integration between Safety Manager and EHPM will be rolled out, offering a peer-to-peer communication between these node types.

"We see a future in which the HPM starts to melt directly into the Experion system. In fact, becoming just a native controller within the Experion environment.

"This demonstrates Honeywell's commitment to continuous evolution, allowing you to take what was once a legacy system and gradually in a step-by-step fashion move it forward such that it becomes part of a new, modern system while at the same time protecting all your intellectual property."