

Version 4.0 of Allen-Bradley's Process Configuration and Operation software package is designed to help simplify the integration of PLCs into process control applications.

The Automation Fair provided opportunities for users to see products that wouldn't normally make it to other trade shows. Both Motorola (Schaumburg, IL), and RACO Manufacturing and Engineering (Emeryville, CA) showed

products that allow users to remotely interact with automation equipment. Motorola showed its Alert Central wireless monitoring system for on-site paging, formatted to message users with the company's Site Pager system, complete

with display. RACO offers a line of alarm autodialers that provides bidirectional communications with Allen-Bradley controllers.

ADC Market on the Move to Open Systems

BY MARTY WEIL

CHICAGO, IL—Although Scan-Tech '94, sponsored by AIM USA and AIM International Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA), in conjunction with Reed Exhibition Companies (Stamford, CT), featured the usual complement of product upgrades and introductions, the emergence of open-systems technology in the ADC industry dominated conversation at the show.

"As organizations across North America implement migration strategies from legacy systems to distributed client/

server networks, the importance of open systems compatibility becomes paramount," said Duncan Smith, vice president of product development for Epic Data (Richmond, B.C., Canada).

For its part, Epic Data introduced a new radio-frequency fixed-station data collection terminal. The Epic Data MPT 8000 features XCS middleware, which provides a transparent connection to the entire open-system enterprise.

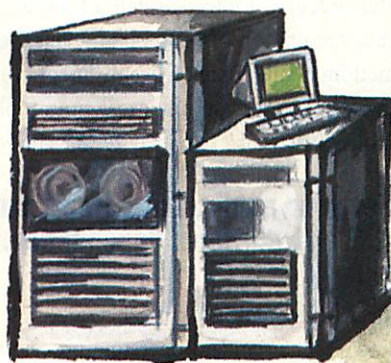
"The primary task of a data collection system in an open environment is to provide two-way transparency between the users and the destination business application on the network," said Smith. "The challenge is to provide an optimum architecture to collect, verify, and forward data on the one hand, while maintaining an efficient, open compatibility on the other."

Computer Identities Corp. (Canton, MA) weighed in with the introduction of its own

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Innovative plants are now computing in a client/server environment, accessing data at a fraction of the cost, integrating with CAD, Condition Monitoring, Bar Coding, and other on-line plant systems providing real-time information to real decision makers.

automation software tools, reassuringly serious.

Industrial automation is no game. And for most engineering professionals, it's not a subject to be approached lightly. Or with undue levity.

Curiously, some vendors of automation software don't share this sober view. Which begs the question: Is the light-heartedness of their approach also reflected in the attributes of their product? Have they made fun a priority at the expense of function?

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