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Besides being able to test the interoperability of their devices, manufacturers who attended the North American EtherCAT Plug Fest 2014 were able to get an exclusive look at future EtherCAT test developments.

## High participation at North American EtherCAT Plug Fest 2014

A special feature of the North American EtherCAT Plug Fest 2014 was the event's location. Savage, Minnesota is not only the North American headquarters of Beckhoff Automation LLC, but since early 2014, the facility has also housed the ETG-accredited EtherCAT Test Center (ETC). ETC test engineers in attendance assisted the 35 Plug Fest participants with the testing of their EtherCAT devices for interoperability. The event set the tone for a successful future relationship between the test center and ETG members in North America.

Rainer Hoffmann, who works for the ETG in Germany and attended the Plug Fest in Savage, was pleased with the balance between master and slave devices that the participants brought to the event: "We were able to focus equally on all device types, as well as answer many open questions, explain testing procedures, and share EtherCAT best practices."

In addition to the official version of the EtherCAT Conformance Test Tool (CTT), ETG representatives demonstrated a beta version CTT to give the attending EtherCAT device manufacturers a sneak peek at the status of the upcoming version. Makers of EtherCAT devices for the semiconductor industry also received an update on the latest developments surrounding the EtherCAT equipment test for their particular industry, which is a dominant factor in the North American technology space.

## EtherCAT becomes a national technology standard in China

For over 10 years, EtherCAT has been used in applications all over the world and the EtherCAT Technology Group (ETG) is the largest fieldbus organization on the planet today. Recently, the technology added a new milestone to its history of successes. During an official ceremony held at the Chinese government's guest house in Beijing, it was announced that EtherCAT is now recognized as National Standard GB/T 31230. Created in close cooperation with the Instrumentation and Technology Economy Institute (ITEI), many ETG member companies in China, and the local EtherCAT Competence Center at Beihang University, the standard will make it even easier for users, device manufacturers, and machine builders to understand and implement EtherCAT technology.

Special highlights of the event were the application examples and the resulting benefits presented by representatives from business and science. Yunying Huang, vice president of the Shenyang Machine Tool R&D Institute Shanghai,

for example, pointed out that the performance, openness, and large portfolio of EtherCAT-compliant products were the main criteria for designing the new, intelligent i5 CNC machine tool to be fully based on EtherCAT. Prof. Ji Huan of Beihang University explained that from a research-based viewpoint, CNC machines clearly benefit from EtherCAT: "Besides its performance, the greatest benefit of EtherCAT in China is the excellent support the technology enjoys in our country. Training classes, seminars, workshops, sample code, documentation, implementation support and testing, and certification services are all readily available."

The ceremony also featured presentations by Martin Rostan, Executive Director of the ETG, and Beryl Fan, who manages the ETG office in Beijing, as well as live demonstrations of various EtherCAT systems with Chinese and international EtherCAT products.



Safety-over-EtherCAT Seminar in Yokohama, Japan

## ETG continues success in Asia: Attendance rises for Japanese and South Korean events

Successful EtherCAT Plug Fests and Safety-over-EtherCAT seminars in Japan and South Korea are evidence that EtherCAT and the ETG continue to gain respect in the Asian market. Almost 80 people attended this year's developer meetings. Interest was especially great in Japan, even compared with the typical high attendance levels seen in Europe. Another indicator was the large number of EtherCAT master devices that guests brought with them. Florian Häfele from ETG headquarters in Nuremberg, Germany was pleased with the growing popularity: "At this year's EtherCAT Plug Fest in Japan, we saw 10 different EtherCAT master devices. Especially remarkable was the technical sophistication of the implementations we tested."

Similarly, the EtherCAT Plug Fest 2014 in South Korea was characterized by increased interest from local manufacturers regarding the functional details of

EtherCAT technology. In meetings with EtherCAT experts, attendees received in-depth answers to their technical questions and learned about the latest EtherCAT developments, particularly in the areas of diagnostics and automatic configuration.

Two Safety-over-EtherCAT seminars, held for the first time in Japan and South Korea, also saw excellent attendance numbers. More than 65 guests learned about safe data transmission with Safety-over-EtherCAT (FSoE) and received a detailed update about the technology's latest developments. Both events focused on the functionalities of FSoE, as well as outlining its benefits for equipment makers. The attendees were highly impressed by the ease of implementation and corresponding support services.



Guests of honor and working group members during the ceremony for the official introduction of EtherCAT as a national standard in China.



Safety-over-EtherCAT Seminar in Seoul, South Korea