Hilscher netX products support CC-Link IE Field Basic

The latest netX firmware update for network controllers, embedded modules and printed circuit interface cards from Hilscher has been released with CC-Link IE Field Basic capability. This provides device makers with the option to design simpler, more cost-effective networked components using the latest CC-Link IE 100Mbit Ethernet technology.

The netX family of flexible network chip solutions is designed to provide a platform that allows device manufacturers to build a range of products with onboard networking capability for Real-Time Ethernet and traditional fieldbus systems. Hilscher's latest introduction to the platform firmware extends compatibility to include 100Mbit Ethernet devices with CC-Link IE network connectivity.

CC-Link IE is the only open industrial Ethernet technology for industrial automation offering gigabit speeds and bandwidth; thanks to this status CC-Link IE's popularity is growing globally. CC-Link IE Field Basic Ethernet compatibility for 100Mbit devices can be achieved with just a software update, this instantly gives device makers and networking solutions providers such as Hilscher more flexibility and scope in their range.

John Browett, General Manager at CLPA Europe, said: "CC-Link IE Field Basic is one of our most recent technology developments, so it is great to have a prominent CLPA partner producing critical components. This enables device manufacturers to design and build a range of compatible devices using a platform that they are already familiar with and probably using in current products."

The network chips developed by Hilscher represent the company's popular netX platform, which is already a market leader for enabling open automation networking devices. The solution features revised firmware that makes it easy for new users and current Hilscher customers to add CC-Link IE compatibility to existing products based on the netX platform without any hardware modification. More precisely, any Real-Time Ethernet interface from Hilscher, including existing devices, can be equipped with CC-Link IE Field Basic with a simple firmware update. Christof Hunger, Product Manager at Hilscher, explained: "CC-Link IE Field Basic is based on standard 100Mbit Ethernet and Hilscher's implementation is a new real-time firmware for the existing netX technology," and continued: "Device manufacturers can now use CC-Link IE technology in a range of Ethernet environments."

While CC-Link IE's core technology can offer gigabit speeds and bandwidth for real-time Industry 4.0 applications, there are many products that are not ready yet to support a gigabit physical layer. With CC-Link IE Field Basic, CLPA now offers a solution for existing 100Mbit devices, enabling them to support CC-Link IE without requiring hardware changes.

Browett and Hunger agree that the solution developed by Hilscher will also offer device makers the ability to expand their product lines and have easier access to the Asian market where CC-Link IE industrial Ethernet and CC-Link fieldbus are the de facto standard.

Christof Hunger explains: "To help these customers, Hilscher decided to add CC-Link IE Field Basic to its protocol spectrum. As this now exists as firmware for our netX technology, manufacturers can develop one multi-protocol device for all important automation markets in Europe, the U.S. and Asia."

The collaboration between the CLPA and Hilscher was key. "Hilscher has been working closely with the CLPA for many years, and as a result of our cooperation, we have been able to access the technology trends and technical specifications we needed for the Asian market."

To hear from Christof Hunger directly, click to watch the video https://youtu.be/qX9LsmevWmQ

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CLPA279   Hilscher Support for CC-Link IEFB (Field Basic) / CC-Link IE (SPS 2017)

Keywords: CC-Link Partner Association, Hilscher netX, CC-Link IE Field Basic, Ethernet technology, networking capability, industrial automation, Industry 4.0, 100Mbit devices.

Image 1: Christof Hunger, Product Manager, Hilscher.

Image 2: With CC-Link IE Field Basic, CLPA now offers a solution for existing 100Mbit devices, enabling them to support CC-Link IE without requiring hardware changes.

About the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA)

The CLPA is an international organisation founded in 2000 dedicated to the technical development and promotion of the CC-Link family of open automation networks. The CLPA's key technology is CC-Link IE, the world's first and only open gigabit Ethernet for automation and an ideal solution for Industry 4.0 applications due to its unmatched bandwidth. Currently the CLPA has over 3,400 member companies worldwide, with more than 1,800 certified products available from over 300 manufacturers. CC-Link is the leading open industrial automation network technology in Asia and is becoming increasingly popular in Europe and the Americas.

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