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Note to editors: Link to high res photo and picture caption follow news release text.

TwinCAT Automation Software from Beckhoff Turns 25

Celebrating a quarter century of success, the Beckhoff engineering and runtime platform continues to deliver maximum functionality through bold decisions and a drive for innovation

SAVAGE, Minnesota, Dec. 14, 2021 – The TwinCAT automation software suite from Beckhoff has reached its 25th anniversary in the market. Ubiquitous in automation today, TwinCAT has served as a powerful resource for engineers since 1996 – a quarter of a century. In addition, the underlying PC-based control technology from Beckhoff has been going strong since 1986, marking 35 years in the industry. TwinCAT, short for The Windows Control and Automation Technology, provides numerous benefits from its robust software functionality. The advantages of TwinCAT stem from its modular expandability extending to support for innovations such as integrated machine vision and artificial intelligence.

Since the 1996 introduction of the first software generation, TwinCAT 2, this product is still available and maintained, which is proof of its continuity and compatibility with current systems. Windows served as the operating system and the PLC programming was adapted to meet the requirements of the IEC 61131-3 standard. This introduced the ability to implement an industrial control system on a “regular” PC with a standard operating system.

Another milestone was the decision to align the TwinCAT programming environment with the world’s predominant IT programming environment. Microsoft Visual Studio® is used for all major IT software developments, and Beckhoff also used this tool to develop TwinCAT 2 software. So why not develop PLC software applications with Visual Studio® as well? The

subsequent TwinCAT 3 software generation was introduced in 2010 and delivered to customers from 2011 on – which makes for another 10-year anniversary and another track record of success in the field.

The integration of the TwinCAT automation tools into Visual Studio® established a completely new type of engineering environment. With the availability to use additional programming standards such as C/C++ and MATLAB®/Simulink®, further possibilities emerged for more efficient code generation for machines and systems. This has also gained widespread acceptance in the automation industry.

In addition to programming, TwinCAT offers an I/O configuration interface for a wide variety of fieldbus systems – first and foremost EtherCAT as well as more than 30 other communication protocols. Motion control applications from simple PTP movements to sophisticated CNC and robot kinematics are just as much part of the ongoing evolution as safety functions, image processing for machine vision and machine learning. With the advent of Industrie 4.0 and the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), it quickly became clear that the cloud, long established in IT, would also become a major factor in the automation market. To provide this functionality for customers, Beckhoff launched hardware and software solutions for IoT and cloud connectivity in 2015, followed by data analytics tools in 2018.

TwinCAT automation software

Link to high res image:

https://download.beckhoff.com/download/press/2021/NorthAmerica/Beckhoff_25_years_TwinCAT_images.zip

Press picture:

Picture caption:

TwinCAT is the modular automation software platform from Beckhoff that seamlessly combines standard control functions with additional functionalities such as robotics, machine vision and artificial intelligence.

Beckhoff Automation is a provider of advanced and open automation solutions based upon proven technologies for customers to implement high performance control systems faster and at a lower overall cost than traditional PLC and motion control systems. Beckhoff's "New Automation Technology" product range includes PC-based control, Industrial PCs, automation controllers, operator interfaces, I/O, servo drives and motors. With representation in more than 75 countries, Beckhoff is well positioned to provide global sales and service to its customers. Beckhoff sales and service are handled directly, with no intermediaries involved for exceptional customer service and consultation.

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Send questions regarding "25 years of TwinCAT" to:

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