

Celebrating milestones



By Bob Stasonis

The best birthday ever

As I write this column, AUTESTCON 2007 is winding down. As the premier U.S. show for the major test platforms in our industry – I’m talking PXI, VXI, and LXI – it’s always a good place to see what the industry is up to.

This year the PXI Systems Alliance really went all out for the 10th Anniversary of the PXI specification. With a grand champagne toast (50 bottles worth!) and birthday cake for all, the Alliance showed attendees that the moment was a celebration of long-term innovation and market acceptance and reminded everyone to watch out for PXI in the next 10 years.

Besides the anniversary milestone, what was really important to PXI members and users was the fact that the PXISA showed off three functioning multivendor demos in their booth. Each one tested or simulated testing a real device – a digital to analog converter, ZigBee wireless device, and a jet engine. The latter was a simulation, of course, although it would have been interesting to see a real jet engine operating in the booth.

Now understand that the PXI Systems Alliance has “talked the talk” about the interoperability of PXI modules from many vendors for years, but this is the first time the Alliance “walked the walk” in public. Ten companies, many of which are competitors, rolled up their sleeves, defined the tests, provided the hardware, and wrote the code to make it happen. I participated in some of the conference calls held by the multivendor demo team during the development and can say that the effort was very commendable. And best of all, the hardware played together nicely. As they say in the UK, it was a *yeoman’s effort* on the part of ADLINK Technology, Gage Applied Technologies, Geotest, Göpel electronic, Keithley Instruments, Kinetic Systems, MAC Panel, National Instruments, Pickering Interfaces, and ZTEC Instruments. By the time you read this, the demos will also be strutting their stuff in Germany at the Productronica trade show. I’m certain it will excel in Europe as well. It’s a powerful message to PXI users that they can choose the best products for their application and that the modules will play together.

PXI’s international reach

Speaking of overseas, it is important to note that PXI’s acceptance in the market is becoming more and more international – it is no longer perceived as a U.S. standard. In my travels to China

and India this year, I’ve seen increasing acceptance of PXI as well as more companies building PXI products – there is even a company in India that is considering joining the Alliance. As an industry, we’re no longer selling the concept of PXI. Now the issue is one of identifying the individual company’s technology niches, communicating this market differentiation to the end user, and reinforcing the message of interoperability. With global outsourcing a reality, the acceptance of PXI in more markets ensures its continued growth for some time to come.

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Changing times ahead

Bob Dylan sang, “The Times, They Are A-Changin’” probably well before many of my readers were even born (the fact that I was around to hear this song when it was new in 1964 is depressing). The song was a true statement then, and it’s still true today.

Why the reminiscing? Well, this is the last issue of the magazine *PXI, Test & Technology* in its current form. Please read more about the changes in store for 2008 in a note from our editors on page 30.

PXI keeps expanding, and test and measurement topics will continue to be a big part of our coverage. We hope you find the information we provide and the new direction we’re taking valuable in making your jobs just a little easier.