

BACnet Forum demonstrates user applications

Over 150 users, planners and manufacturers of building automation systems and components exchanged ideas and experiences at the first BACnet Forum since the ISO standardization.

BACnet is leading the way – in Germany, Europe and around the world. That was the conclusion of the BACnet Forum which took place on 8th and 9th September 2005 in Berlin – the first user forum of the BACnet Interest Group Europe (BIG-EU) since the incorporation of BACnet into the ISO catalogue. At the forum it became clear that BACnet is becoming an ever more important factor for success in the design of efficient building automation systems.

The BIG-EU invited users to Berlin on the tenth anniversary of the BACnet standard. Safety questions and IT management were on the program together with optimizing costs and tips on preparing tenders for open systems. 14 companies presented their BACnet solutions at the accompanying exhibition.

Nils Meinert, president of the BIG-EU, regards the cross-manufacturer communication standard as a new market quality: “with our certification of BACnet conformity, the interoperability workshops for cross-manufacturer device testing and the increasing number of members, the use of BACnet in Europe is proceeding apace.”

The biggest advantage of BACnet is that the standard is oriented towards the needs of building automation. H. Michael Newman, the American BACnet pioneer and founding chairman of the standardization committee, emphasizes indispensable functions such as the operating calendar, time program, trend data and alarms which are established features of the BACnet norm.

The second biggest advantage is that BACnet is hardware independent. In addition, as an open standard, BACnet is license-free and free of charge. Newman estimates that 15,000 BACnet systems are in operation in 82 countries around the world. Of these, 6,000 are multi-vendor systems – the show piece of BACnet.

Integration planner, Achim Heidemann, sees building automation with BACnet as being at the beginning of becoming a holistic organization, which in the industrial sector it already has been for a long time: “with BACnet you can start planning across all assembly sections”. The big advantage is that information is continuously available. This enables easy optimization of the building systems, in particular with respect to cost, usability and sustainability.

Planners as well as manufacturers are increasingly demanding an automated test to certify conformity to the BACnet standard. Vice President, Hans-Werner Koch, thinks that labeling successfully tested BACnet devices will be a criterion for meeting the European guidelines on energy efficiency: “The BTL logo, which we have been awarding since 2004, will be used to prove manufacturer independent communication”. René Quirighetti, speaker of the BIG-EU technical group, thinks that an automated test is not far away. The BIG-EU is developing a testing procedure that will be available by the end of 2006.

The BACnet forum covered the protocol's successful history, the added value for real estate, the successful implementation of BACnet solutions and much more. Hardly any question was

left unanswered: the advantages of BACnet compared with other communications protocols, the importance of BACnet for the European guidelines on energy efficiency and networking with operational IT applications

Prof. Peter Fischer, spokesman of the BIG-EU Advisory Board summarized: “the BACnet Forum brought together users, planners and manufacturers – a step forward for all of us”.