

port industrial automation GmbH

Latest software and hardware solutions for the development of CC-Link IE TSN products

port industrial automation, an engineering company that specialises in industrial real-time data communication, has developed two alternatives for CC-Link IE TSN products: a software stack (master/slave) reduces in-house development time and costs for the component manufacturer while an embedded system on module (SoM) can directly expand existing platforms.

Founded in 1990, port industrial automation GmbH based in Halle/Saale, Germany, is committed to industrial real-time communication in all sectors. More than 500 product and system developers worldwide use MCU middleware, libraries, cores, protocol stacks, drivers, tools and development services from port to successfully place their products on the market.

Since the beginning of CANopen, the company has primarily relied on multi-protocol solutions, working in collaboration with market drivers from the European and US automation industries. Today, port focuses on the Industrial Ethernet protocols in their many forms and that is why, in June 2018, it joined the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA) in order to support its latest Industrial Ethernet technology CC-Link IE TSN which combines gigabit bandwidth and Time-Sensitive Networking (TSN).

“port mainly serves industrial markets such as factory automation, logistics automation, sensor technology and the process industry and our real-time communication solutions cover the whole communication chain. CC-Link IE TSN provides an interesting technology platform which enables data from sensor to interface ‘IT’ to be displayed safely and represents an important addition to our portfolio”, says Dietmar R. Franke, CEO/CFO of port industrial automation. “We will continue to develop the company by focussing on TSN as we will fully support the whole topic of ‘Time-Sensitive Networking’ with a variety of products.”

The product range for CC-Link IE TSN currently includes a software stack that contains the tools required to configure, manage and install the new open specification. A decisive advantage of the stack solution is its hardware independence. The stack is ported to the relevant hardware platform in a consistent format and already contains the TSN features that

are supported according to IEEE standards. In addition, there are appropriate configuration and management tools.

Moreover, port has developed a hardware product for CC-Link IE TSN in the form of an embedded system on module (SoM) which can be used as an add-on or expansion board for existing systems. “In other words, customers who are currently using a platform that offers a serial peripheral interface (SPI) can also add CC-Link IE TSN to their platform via this interface”, says Franke.

While the licensing of port’s CC-Link IE TSN stack is aimed at customers who will then be able to optimise their development effort for larger quantities, the company also wants the embedded module to offer a CC-Link IE TSN option for companies which produce very small quantities. Franke sees opportunities for the SoM alternative for mechanical engineering in particular: “This fully integrated SoM alternative is particularly suitable for manufacturers who make more specific products such as certain gateways or I/Os with small annual production runs because all the customer has to take care of is the integration of the hardware. However we also offer that as a service for the CC-Link IE TSN system.”

“port is providing a key technology that allows customers to quickly adopt CC-Link IE TSN and develop advanced automation products to market. By providing deterministic, reliable communications, CC-Link IE TSN offers an ideal solution to create smart factories, helping end-users with their quest for high-speed control applications,” says Thomas Burke, Global Strategic Advisor for CLPA. “I look forward to working with port to increase awareness about their state-of-the-art products and how their enabling technology is well positioned to support businesses’ digital transformation strategies.”

Photo caption: port has developed a hardware product for CC-Link IE TSN in the form of an embedded system on module (SoM) which can be used as an add-on or expansion board for existing systems.

Keywords: CLPA, CC-Link Partner Association, port, CC-Link IE TSN, Time-Sensitive Networking, software stack, SoM, embedded system on modules, embedded module, gigabit bandwidth, real-time data communication

About The CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA)

The CLPA is an international organisation founded in 2000, now celebrating its 20th Anniversary. Over the last 20 years, the CLPA has been 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 TSN, the world's first open industrial Ethernet to combine gigabit bandwidth with Time Sensitive Networking (TSN), making it the leading solution for Industry 4.0 applications. Currently the CLPA has almost 3,800 member companies worldwide, and more than 2,000 compatible products available from over 340 manufacturers. Around 30 million devices using CLPA technology are in use worldwide.

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