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Coactive Launches First Architecture to Support the Convergence Between Control and IP Networks

SAUSALITO, Calif., May 20, 1998 -- Coactive Networks today announced the availability of the first networking architecture to support the emerging trend toward integrating automation and control systems with corporate IP networks. The new Coactive IOConnect Architecture will, for the first time, provide a reliable and scaleable framework for the transmission of automation packets across the corporate IP network based on open standards.

As the networking environment evolves, MIS personnel face the new challenge of integrating commercial systems that have been traditionally outside of their sphere of influence. These automation and control systems cover diverse applications -- for example building automation, security and access control, energy management, and retail branch communications. The Coactive IOConnect Architecture is an embedded, distributed approach to network connectivity which provides the stability, manageability and adherence to open standards that MIS requires of any packets that traverse the IP infrastructure.

“As the trend of network convergence continues, control and automation data will increasingly become a part of the pervasive IP network, along with voice and video,” said Janice Roberts, senior vice president of marketing and business development for 3Com Corporation. “MIS departments need to understand the nature of control data, and ensure that they have the ability to manage this new component in their networks.”

“In an organization, control networks are typically managed by non-IT staff. These people want to extend their systems over the IP network -- they want to take advantage of that existing infrastructure,” said Harsha Dabholkar, Honeywell Fellow at Honeywell Home and Building Controls. “Coactive’s products help MIS departments connect control systems to IP networks without causing problems. Coactive understands the IP networking world, as well as control systems and their requirements.”

The convergence between control and enterprise networks is being driven by three factors. First, standard control networking technologies such as LonWorks have created an installed base of sophisticated and highly integrated control applications. Secondly, corporations have made a sizable investment in making the IP network a ubiquitous resource. And finally, corporations want to increase the return on their networking investment by extending the use of the technology into new areas, and integrating corporate communications of all kinds into a single, manageable infrastructure.

About the IOConnect Architecture

The Coactive IOConnect Architecture addresses the convergence of control and enterprise networks with an embedded, distributed, and scaleable solution which adheres to open standards. The IOConnect Architecture supports a variety of control standards including LonWorks, the leading control network technology, and has been

specifically designed to support and leverage Internet Protocol (IP) standards and technologies. This approach provides unmatched flexibility, reduces system costs, and enables new functionalities. The technical benefits offered by Coactive's IOConnect Architecture include:

- Leveraging existing LAN wiring and IP infrastructures in control systems;
- Increasing the return on investment made in the data networking infrastructure;
- Allowing the physical and logical segmenting of large control systems;
- Reducing the total cost of ownership of control and automation systems; and
- Enabling a new class of applications via seamless web and database access to control information.

Unlike existing approaches, Coactive's IOConnect Architecture is based upon a distributed network of embedded connectivity devices, providing the reliability, security, and scalability required in next-generation control systems. Because it is an embedded, distributed architecture, IOConnect delivers throughput, reliability and flexibility, while eliminating the PC bottleneck that is at the center of existing approaches. Instead of gathering all control data into a single dedicated workstation, and then forwarding the information across this workstation's enterprise network connection in a fixed way, the IOConnect Architecture allows you to connect multiple control subsystems to the enterprise network in a distributed fashion, where it makes sense both logically and physically. The subsystem connection is accomplished using a compact embedded connectivity device, rather than a PC.

About Coactive Networks

Coactive Networks is a leading provider of open solutions for connecting control systems to enterprise networks and the Internet. The company offers a full line of routers, servers, and gateways for creating powerful next-generation applications. Having closed a first round of funding in Q1 1998, Coactive has shipping products and is the market leader in providing connectivity solutions for LonWorks, the leading control network. Coactive is a privately held corporation based in Sausalito, CA. Detailed information on Coactive products, news announcements, seminars, training, and support is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.coactive.com>.

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