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Opto 22 Introduces SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit

Hardware and Software Kit Designed to Build Redundant PAC Systems

Temecula, CA – March 29, 2010 – Opto 22, developer and manufacturer of the award-winning SNAP PAC System™ family of programmable automation controllers, I/O, and accessories, has released the SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit (SNAP-PAC-ROK), used to design an Ethernet-based redundant control system with maximum reliability and distributed intelligence that can instantly recover from failure.

Using standard Opto 22 S-series SNAP PACs, SNAP Ethernet I/O, and the newly announced PAC Project Professional 9.0 software suite, combined with the SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit, customers can configure automation systems with dual programmable automation controllers (PACs) that essentially synchronize and run in parallel. In the event one controller fails or is knocked offline, the other controller will assume command and continue to execute the control program and the processes it runs with no interruption or restart necessary. This feature, commonly referred to in the automation industry as “redundancy,” provides many advantages. Foremost among these is a significant reduction in the control system’s mean time between failures (MTBF), and thus even greater levels of reliability for process-oriented applications in the manufacturing of semiconductors, thin film LCD, and other high-value product batches. Redundant control systems also prove advantageous (and are frequently mandated) for processing, handling, and transport of chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and oil and gas products and byproducts.

IC Engineering Project Manager Ryan McCollum has implemented large-scale automation projects at the research and testing facilities of one of the world’s largest oil companies. He

claims that redundancy features make Opto 22 controllers superior to similar PLC-based solutions.

“Redundancy, combined with the larger memory and better multi-tasking capabilities of the Opto 22 PACs, make them superior to most PLCs. The Opto 22 hardware also provides a variety of other useful, often exclusive capabilities,” he says.

For both new and established installations, redundant Opto 22 control systems created with the SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit provide several unique features. For instance, the two identically configured controllers (active and backup) are able to swap roles in the redundancy scheme at any time. This offers a unique flexibility and other benefits during system start-up and commissioning. Customers can keep their control system online and operating even as they make changes to, or completely replace their control program. Once the new program is downloaded to one controller, it becomes active and the second controller is updated with the new instruction set. Customers can repeat this process as often as they like, as they test, fine tune, and configure their control program to their exact specifications. Similarly, customers seeking to make their existing system redundant need only to add the SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit, the latest version of PAC Project Professional, and a second S-series controller, which, upon commissioning, is automatically populated with the most current firmware and control program.

Other ways in which the SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit (and the redundant systems it establishes) differ from those of other automation suppliers:

- Utilizes the company’s standard controllers. No special redundant controllers required.
- Communicates over Ethernet using standard Cat 5 cabling. No proprietary communication protocols, interfaces, or custom cables.

The SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit includes:

- SNAP PAC Redundancy Arbiter – a standalone processor that connects serially to both controllers and monitors and regulates their status and maintains synchronization of the control program during system startup.

- SNAP Redundant Power Switch – allows power re-starts to controllers in the event of failure and during firmware upgrades.

The PAC Redundancy Manager, a software utility for configuring redundant systems, including IP addresses, program synchronization, and firmware matching, is included in PAC Project Professional 9.0. This utility is also used for maintaining and monitoring a functioning system.

Support for redundant controllers is perhaps the most anticipated and powerful new feature found in Opto 22's recently announced PAC Project 9.0 software. Customers upgrading to PAC Project 9.0 can create redundant systems simply and cost-effectively.

The SNAP PAC Redundancy Option Kit (SNAP-PAC-ROK) is available now from the Opto 22 website and a worldwide network of authorized distributors.

About Opto 22

Opto 22 develops and manufactures hardware and software for applications involving industrial automation and control, remote monitoring, and data acquisition. Opto 22 products use standard, commercially available networking and computer technologies, and have an established reputation worldwide for ease-of-use, innovation, quality, and reliability. Opto 22 products are used by automation end-users, OEMs, and information technology and operations personnel. The company was founded in 1974 and is privately held in Temecula, California, USA. Opto 22 products are available through a worldwide network of distributors and system integrators. For more information, contact Opto 22 headquarters at +1-951-695-3000 or visit www.opto22.com.