

# FDT Group and ECT Press Event: Hannover Fair 2007

## Questions and Answers

### **1. Why did the ECT and FDT Group decide to work together even though each claims to have the better solution for device integration?**

Currently, there exist two technologies which are offered to end users. On the one hand they overlap to some extent, on the other hand they have a different scope of application. Unfortunately, existing market dynamics forces users in some cases to choose one of these two and offers no migration path from one to the other. Because this approach is unacceptable for end users, there is a need for a single unified solution. Additionally, manufacturers are currently investing in parallel development efforts to support two technologies. For these reasons, we decided to join efforts and develop a common Future Device Integration (FDI) architecture.

### **2. Is there already a solution for the common device integration visible?**

There is not yet a solution for a common approach. There exist ideas and concepts that have to be discussed in the technical teams, who will then have to define the architecture for a common device integration solution based on use case requirements. A white paper published by itm describes a device integration concept that combines the advantages of EDDL with those of FDT, i.e. it makes use of a textual description for basic integration and allows for advanced application needs to use software based integration

### **3. What is the goal of this new agreement?**

Our goal is to develop a unified path forward for device integration that is based on use case requirements, incorporates the best aspects of each technology and eliminates redundancies where they may exist.

### **4. What is the scope of the joint technical development that you announced today?**

Today we announced our intention to work together on a unified solution for device integration. This architecture will be developed with the following guidelines:

- a client server architecture
- platform and operating system independent
- host system independent
- compatible with existing EDDL and DTM based device descriptions
- applicable to any field device communication technologies
- applicable for hierarchical and heterogeneous network topologies
- an open specification and become an international standard

### **5. How will the project be organized? How will it be staffed?**

The FDT Group will join the ECT and become part of its steering committee. A joint working team will be responsible for the technical development.

### **6. What is the timing for implementation?**

The technical work team shall meet shortly and detail the scope of work, resource requirements and a product roadmap. Our intention is to proceed as fast as possible and our first milestone is to have draft specifications and prototypes in place no later than the end of 2008.

### **7. What will happen with the installed base of existing EDD's and DTM's?**

It is the individual responsibility of the ECT and the FDT Group to develop migration strategies for their installed base using the common FDI. The intent is to ensure backward compatibility with existing EDD's and DTM's.

### **8. Will this specification become an international standard?**

It is our intent that the FDI model is an open specification and an international IEC standard.

**9. What about the requirements in Factory Automation?**

FDT covers applications in factory automation and process automation. EDDL is used mainly in process automation and for some device descriptions in the factory automation market. It is the intent to develop FDI in a way that it could be used for factory automation devices.

**10. What will be the impact on current developments? Will current projects be delayed?**

This common development is an addition to existing technology development and standardization efforts that each organization has planned and budgeted. Current projects will continue in concert with this development effort.

**11. Who will own the specification and who will be responsible for its maintenance and development?**

In future the FDI model specification will be owned collectively by all members of the ECT. When it becomes an international standard, the technology will be available under the rules of IEC. The ECT will be responsible for its maintenance and development.

**12. How will you position this announcement in the market? Will you market it jointly?**

Our intent is to jointly announce this agreement to the market. For now, the ECT, along with the FDT Group, will begin to highlight the benefits of an FDI model through their marketing channels. For the future, we will develop together a common set of supporting communication material that promotes the benefits of the unified solution.

**13. Is there an existing framework for the FDI model?**

The final FDI architecture will be developed by a joint technical team. The basis for this solution is the concept from the German based institute itm as outlined in its White Paper v 1.1 as well as the FDT and EDDL specifications.

**14. Will the common FDI be operating system independent?**

Yes, one of the primary goals of the solution will be to ensure the FDI model is operating system and host system independent.

**15. When will a specification be available?**

Our plan is to have a specification completed by the end of 2008.

**16. What are the next steps?**

The technical team will work out a detailed solution based on common use cases and common requirements and will develop the technical specification based on these use cases and requirements.

**17. Which protocols will the common FDI cover?**

The FDI model shall be applicable to any field device communication technology; e.g. HART, PROFIBUS, FF, PROFINET, etc. The architecture will be available for adoption by other fieldbuses.

**18. How can it be made sure that Host and Device suppliers will comply with the new specification?**

Conformance tests will assure that components or files are developed according to the FDI model.

**19. It looks like FDI works like a printer driver in Windows. Is that a good analogy?**

A better analogy would be to say that FDI should work like web pages using a web browser on Internet.

**20. Can FDI be used to provide externally accessible information, or does it only display values on the screen?**

FDI will support both. The host can use the information about the data to present the data as well as making it available through to other applications, for example through an OPC-UA server.

**21. Is FDI only intended to display data in computer workstations or will it support handheld communicators as well?**

FDI is intended to be platform independent supporting software and sophisticated device management systems on Windows workstations as well as embedded devices such as handheld field communicators. Data servers such as for OPC will also utilize FDI to build name space etc. Thus FDI will provide a single universal solution.

**22. FDI will only work for simple instruments like temperature transmitters, showing diagnostics as brief text messages, right?**

There will be no draw back!! FDI is intended to apply to simple as well as sophisticated devices including, for example, valve positioners or multivariable transmitters.

**23. How will future versions of Windows and its regular service packs affect the compatibility of FDI?**

FDI will be platform independent, e.g. independent of a computer hardware or operating system. Therefore the technology will not be affected by changes in operating systems. The investment in the system is protected.

**24. Do I need to complement FDI with FDT/DTM and EDDL?**

No. FDI will handle all aspects of the device and system life cycle from configuration and commissioning to advanced diagnostics and performance analysis. FDI will be compatible with existing FDT/DTM and EDDL installations.

**25. Devices from different vendors should be displayed consistently. Does FDI technology help to ensure that?**

Yes. FDI gives the device vendor complete freedom to define the *content* on device pages to give access to all device functionality. The *style* (look & feel) will come from the host while the device vendor will have the freedom to write applications for specific functionality.

**26. Over the life time of the system there will be many versions of devices used as failed devices are replaced. How does FDI prevent conflicts between different versions of a device?**

One of the major requirements to FDI is that the addition of a new device or version shall not remove or overwrite existing device descriptions or software components. A new version shall not conflict with an old.

**27. Will FDI meet the requirements of NAMUR NE 105?**

Sure, this is a must. It is of course the major interest of the involved organizations to meet the requirements of a group of important customers.