

Javeriana University - Colombia

The OPC DataHub simplifies OPC connections

Nestled among a rich diversity of flora and fauna in the Andes plateau, on the outskirts of Cali, sits the Javeriana University, headquarters of the oldest system of higher education in Colombia. Engineering students at the Javeriana University augment their rigorous academic studies with a strong tradition of hands-on research.

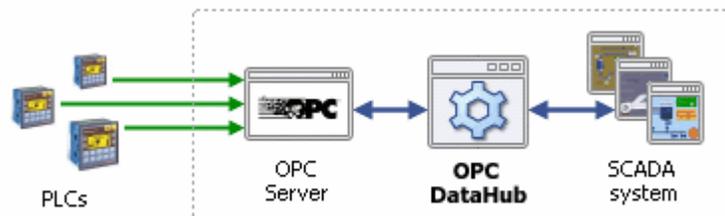
Over the past several years, graduate students in several Research Groups: Automation and Robotics, Cleaner Production, and Thermodynamic Fluids Modeling have developed three different factory process simulators. Small in size and relatively basic in design, this equipment is sophisticated enough to help classes of students gain the understanding and skills they need to pursue careers in a variety of industries. The next stage of this project is to link these simulators to a SCADA system, which will enrich the students' experience of industrial automation.



Recently, graduate students Andres Mora and Juan Guillermo Botero have been using Rockwell's FactoryTalk View SE Studio to design a SCADA system for the project. The three simulated plants are connected by ethernet to a single Unitronics OPC server, and the plan was to then connect that to the SCADA system's OPC client.

“We had hoped to make a simple OPC server-client connection,” said Andres. “But we ran into an unexpected problem. The Unitronics server doesn't support tag browsing, and as far as we know, the only way the Rockwell software can access the tags is by browsing for them. So, when trying to look for the tags in FactoryTalk View Studio, you cannot access them from the OPC server. We aren't sure why this is so, and there may be a work-around, but we needed a way to make a simple, robust connection.”

To solve the problem, Andres and Juan Guillermo searched the Internet for a tool that can act as an OPC server and OPC client simultaneously, and that has sufficient configuration options to support a connection to their SCADA system. They found the OPC DataHub, and discovered that it could do exactly what they needed.



“With the OPC DataHub, we were able to directly access the tags delivered by the Unitronics OPC server,” said Andres, “and since the OPC DataHub does support tag

browsing, FactoryTalk View Studio was then able to browse the tags that OPC DataHub provides. It took a few minutes to configure, and we had our connection up and running.

“This is Stage One of a bigger project,” continued Andres. “We expect it to run for at least another year. During that time undergraduate students will be using the system for lab assignments and other projects. The OPC DataHub just runs in the background, giving us a consistent, reliable connection. It has been very helpful in allowing the project to move forward smoothly and quickly.”

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The OPC DataHub is a highly optimized integration tool for real-time data. It provides quick, reliable and secure access to valuable process and production data and makes it available to management systems, database archives, and remote clients. Combining a number of innovative technologies, the OPC DataHub makes it easy for you to access the real-time data you need to make informed and timely decisions that save time, reduce waste, and increase profitability.

Founded in 1995, Cogent Real-Time Systems is the leader in real-time data integration between Windows, Linux and QNX systems. Customers include the Bank of Canada, Cadbury Chocolate and the European Space Agency. Cogent leverages its experience in real-time data communications to provide the next generation of OPC products. For more information, please contact Cogent at info@cogent.ca or visit our web site at www.opcdatahub.com. You can also call us at +1 (905) 702 7851.

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