



LAN eXtensions for Instrumentation

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LXI Consortium's Eighth PlugFest Looks to the Future of the Technology

Next PlugFest planned for Beijing.

DENVER, Colo., Feb. 27, 2007 -- The [LXI Consortium](#) today announced that its eighth PlugFest, held January 30-February 1 in Austin, Texas, focused on planning key technical upgrades to the Standard. Major points considered by the Technical Committee that will impact future versions of the LXI Standard were:

- Details of a new identify schema that provides more detailed information about an instrument. Delivered in a structured XML file, the information can be easily processed by software programs and tools.
- New requirements for event logging to help test system designers take full advantage of the variety of ways that LXI instruments interact with one another and with system controllers. The event log requirement has been in the LXI Standard from the beginning, but additional rules and details are being added to standardize the log format, making it easier to use and allowing software vendors to include enhanced tools for viewing the log during debugging.
- An enhanced discovery mechanism that makes it easier to identify LXI devices over the Ethernet. The discovery protocol in the LXI Standard enables a user to identify the dynamic IP address of an instrument in order to communicate with it. The new discovery mechanism will correct some inherent limitations in the present method.

- Adoption of IEEE 1588 Version 2.0 when it is introduced later this year. Version 2.0 provides much finer resolution of synchronization, with less network traffic. The improvements also make IEEE 1588 applicable for a broader range of applications.

At the PlugFest, 35 attendees represented equipment manufacturers, software vendors, system integrators and U.S. military agencies. A primary goal of each PlugFest is to help member companies verify [compliance](#) with the LXI specification. To date, more than 312 LXI-compliant products have been introduced. Visit the LXI website for a complete listing of compliant products.

A capacity crowd attended a half-day tutorial session to learn more about the features, capabilities and benefits of LXI. The presentations used in the tutorial sessions can be downloaded from the LXI website at <http://www.lxistandard.org/papers/presentationOverview/>.

The Technical Committee held meetings to plan progress on the Multi-Vendor System Demonstration (MVSD), which was created to show the versatility of LXI in connecting instruments from many different vendors in a single test system. When completed, the MVSD will be used at trade shows and will be available for download on the LXI website. The Technical Committee also issued clarifications to the present standards that became necessary as more suppliers develop Class A and B compliant instruments.

C&H Technologies hosted the LXI meeting and the January 30 dinner event. “PlugFests help vendors accelerate their LXI designs by giving them access to the engineers who wrote the specification,” said Bob Rennard, president of the LXI Consortium. “The working groups appreciate the opportunity to work side-by-side with their counterparts from around the globe.”

The next PlugFest is scheduled for June 19-21, 2007 in Beijing, China, the first PlugFest to be held in Asia. LXI member company Agilent Technologies will serve as host. “During the last week of September, I addressed two industry groups in China,” said Bob Rennard. “Both showed a great deal of interest in the benefits of LXI, and this interest was the driving force behind the Consortium’s decision to hold the next PlugFest in China.” Look for meeting information on the [LXI website](#).

Introduced in 2005, the LXI Standard has been rapidly adopted by 50 companies, representing a who’s who of the test-and-measurement industry. They recognize LXI as the natural successor to GPIB, and that it was time for instruments to go beyond GPIB to make it easier for test system designers and integrators to create faster, more efficient systems.

About LXI and the LXI Consortium

LXI is the LAN-based successor to GPIB. The LXI standard goes beyond GPIB to provide additional capabilities that reduce the time it takes to set up, configure and debug test systems. LXI also helps integrators leverage the time and effort already invested in system software and architecture. The standard is managed by the LXI Consortium, a not-for-profit corporation comprised of leading test and measurement companies. The group’s goals are to develop, support and promote the LXI standard. LXI’s flexible packaging, high-speed I/O, and prolific use of LAN address a broad range of commercial, industrial, aerospace and military applications.

Additional information about LXI-compliant products as well as licensing, specifications and consortium membership is available at <http://www.lxistandard.org>.

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