



LAN eXtensions for Instrumentation

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TRADE NEWS: LXI Consortium's Seventh PlugFest Includes Joint Discussions with ATML Organization

Groups convene to share information and discuss next-generation test systems

DENVER, Colo., Dec. 6, 2006 -- The LXI Consortium today announced that its seventh PlugFest, held this October in Boston, Mass., included joint meetings with the Automatic Test Markup Language (ATML) organization. The combined sessions focused on the use of both LXI-based instrumentation and ATML-formatted data in future test systems designed to meet the needs of government agencies, military organizations and aerospace/defense prime contractors.

At the PlugFest, forty-seven 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. In Boston, products from Agilent Technologies and Kepco, Inc. were tested for Class-C compliance in key areas of the specification, including LAN implementation, Web interface and programming API. All of the tested products are expected to receive certification in December. To date, over 170 LXI-compliant products have been introduced.

As at previous PlugFests, a half-day tutorial session attracted a capacity crowd eager 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/>. Presentations from the Boston PlugFest meeting can be downloaded in a zip file format at <http://www.lxistandard.org/events/pastEvents/>.

The Technical Committee also held meetings to consider issues that will impact future versions of the LXI Standard. Major considerations were:

- IEEE 1588 Version 2.0 will be released during 2007 to address the need for greater accuracy, variable update rates, alternative topologies, rapid reconfiguration after network changes, and fault tolerance. Over the next few months, the Technical Committee and the Timing and Synchronization Working Group will address the question of when to adopt IEEE-1588, version 2.0.
- A Resource Management Working Group was formed to develop a strategy for controlling access to LXI devices from multiple clients and over multiple interfaces. Such a strategy is needed because the Ethernet interface and built-in web capability of LXI devices increase the possibility of conflicts among multiple clients trying to access an instrument at the same time. The working group discussed use cases and scenarios as well as the strengths and weaknesses of potential strategies.
- The LXI LAN/Web Working Group worked on an improved discovery and identification protocol that will enable an LXI device to provide more detailed information about itself upon request. This work will continue during in the group's regular meetings.

The MathWorks, a member of both consortia, hosted the LXI and ATML meetings simultaneously. LXI member Pickering Interfaces co-hosted the October 17 dinner event. "The informative and productive discussions with the ATML group are another strong example of the expanding interest in LXI as the successor to GPIB in commercial and military test systems," said Bob Rennard, president of the LXI Consortium. "Our members acknowledge and thank The MathWorks for enabling and coordinating the LXI and ATML events and the joint sessions."

The ATML organization is an open, independent focus group supported by equipment vendors and government agencies. The group has defined a framework that allows the exchange of ATE and test information in a common format that uses the eXtended Markup Language (XML) standard. More information about ATML and its work with the IEEE is available at <http://grouper.ieee.org/groups/scc20/tii/>.

The Consortium also elected new officers for its 2007 fiscal year: Bob Rennard, president; Jon Semancik, treasurer and secretary; Paul Franklin, technical committee chair; and Bob Stasonis and Jon Semancik, marketing committee co-chairs.

The next PlugFest is scheduled for January 31-February 2, 2007, in Austin, Texas. LXI member company C&H Technologies Inc. will serve as host. Look for meeting information on the LXI Web site in December.

Introduced in 2005, the LXI Standard has been rapidly adopted by 48 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 www.lxistandard.org.

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