

From zero to diagnostics superhero: network diagnostics made easy by Softing Industrial Automation

As anyone who works in an industrial environment will know, keeping your processes running smoothly is absolutely key in terms of efficiency, profitability and output. This is a daily battle which can never be ignored. Any industrial network cabling which is run through cable chains take a lot of abuse – they are worked hard around the clock which results in fragile cores, eventually leading to breakages. Regular testing to make sure they are functioning correctly is therefore essential. This testing can be time consuming and also a little like searching for a needle in a hay stack at times when trying to locate the exact location of the fault.

However, by arming yourself with the right diagnostics tools, the impact of this battle can be kept to a minimum in terms of both disruption and man hours spent. The range of Softing Industrial Automation diagnostics tools form a complete suite of solutions which deliver visibility across the network. Not only can faults be diagnosed on the factory floor with hand-held tools such as the PROFIBUS Tester 5, but they can also be anticipated and forecasted by using a static device such as the TH LINK PROFIBUS.

The PROFIBUS Tester 5 (BC-700-PB) is a powerful diagnostic and troubleshooting tool for comprehensive testing of PROFIBUS segments during operation and can also be used for cable testing. The device is battery powered which guarantees maintenance and commissioning engineers the highest level of mobility in the field.

Test results are shown clearly and are easily understandable on the intuitive graphic display when the device is operated in stand-alone mode, and can be exported for extended analysis in PC mode. Less experienced users will benefit from the intuitive menu navigation of the PROFIBUS Tester. For Fieldbus specialists, the PC software offers many additional functions for executing, analyzing and managing bus tests.

Additionally, the BC-700-PB is the first battery-operated tester that combines bus physics, bus communication and cable testing in one device.

The TH LINK PROFIBUS provides controller-independent access to PROFIBUS networks for plant operation and maintenance staff. The tool supports both network diagnostics applications and plant asset management applications. TH LINK PROFIBUS is easy to use and can be integrated without interfering with the operation of existing installations. It also integrates seamlessly with THSCOPE to provide enhanced insight into the status of the entire factory and all its components at any one time.

This gives maintenance engineers and plant maintainers a flexible set of tools, between the two devices, you can Create a picture of your network with “as built” topology, the quality of the signal being passed between your devices, mean time between failures and how long they take to resolve, BUS utilisation, health of the devices and the sensors connected to them, configuration of field devices and many other features besides

The creation of reference measurements during commissioning and the comparison of the reference status and the actual status of networks have been simplified. Extended measurement values are now available to allow comparing error statistics and absorption of the network. The actual status of

the network during operation can be easily compared to an accepted status at any time, offering a quick and simple way to narrow down the error cause if problems have occurred.

TH SCOPE and TH LINK provide secure access to industrial networks for diagnostic purposes, independently of the controllers, engineering tools and control systems. Designed to meet the specific needs and requirements of maintenance engineering, the diagnostics products require no special IT or network knowledge. In addition to the PROFIBUS standard, the products also support EtherNet/IP, Modbus TCP and PROFINET networks.

Hitex (UK) Ltd are the leading Softing Industrial Automation distributor in the UK, and as such our team of qualified automation specialists are ideally placed to advise on how to get the most out of your network. To find out more about these and the other products in the Softing diagnostic portfolio, then please do not hesitate to contact us on 024 7669 2066 or by emailing automation@hitex.co.uk. There are also more details on the website at www.hitexautomation.co.uk.