Opto 22 announces first zero-configuration Android app for automation and control systems

Industrial automation manufacturer Opto 22 has released Opto aPAC, an application for monitoring and managing the company's SNAP PAC System using mobile devices running the popular Android operating system. Opto aPAC provides real-time control system access and information to authorized automation professionals equipped with wireless, Android-based smart phones or tablets. Control engineers, maintenance personnel, instrumentation technicians, and panel builders can use Opto aPAC to discover SNAP PAC controllers and I/O systems and then view, debug, and fine-tune them, saving time and money during commissioning and ongoing maintenance.

Authorized Opto aPAC users with proper security credentials can monitor values in a SNAP PAC control system such as temperatures, pressures, machine status, voltage, and PIDs. Opto aPAC users can also perform control functions such as changing setpoints, turning lighting on and off, and controlling motors. For quick future reference, specific values in a control system can be retrieved, viewed, and saved to a Watch List.

Opto aPAC is the first Android-based mobile app for automation and control that requires no initial configuration. Unlike mobile HMI apps where it's necessary to first build an operator interface for the mobile device, Opto aPAC retrieves all information as soon as it is connected to a SNAP PAC control system. Opto 22 wireless controllers and I/O are not required.

The mobility provided by Opto aPAC creates new opportunities for control system diagnostics, maintenance, and troubleshooting. Engineers and technicians carrying their Android-based mobile devices in the field or on the plant floor can inspect their SNAP PAC System controllers and I/O processors; view, start, or stop any control strategies running or saved on their controllers; check firmware; and perform other functions that could otherwise only be accomplished from a PC running Microsoft Windows-based PAC Project software.

Finally, Opto aPAC offers the flexibility of virtual private networking and port forwarding, so authorized individuals who might be away from their facilities can still have remote access to their control systems if needed.

"We all know how inconvenient it can be to return to your desktop PC, or drag a laptop with you, whenever you need to perform simple control system maintenance like checking wiring or viewing a system variable," says Chris Ibbeson, software engineer and Android developer at Opto 22. "With Opto aPAC and your smart phone or tablet, you have this capability in the palm of your hand."

The Opto aPAC app is available for download now from the Android Market at a cost

of $4.99 USD (op22.co/JJqdZC [1]). For Apple iPhone, iPad, and other iOS-based devices, Opto 22 offers the functionally identical Opto iPAC app, which is available for download from the iTunes Store (op22.co/JlRZt6 [2]).

www.opto22.com [3].

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