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What belongs together is growing together

IT2Industry at automatica 2018

automatica 2018, in Munich from June 19 to 22, is getting a new integrated subject area with IT2Industry. It focuses on the interplay between automation and information technology, which is a core component of digital automation and robotics. IT2Industry provides companies with guidance on current digitalization trends in industry, promising strategies and important IoT technologies.

The industrial Internet of things (the Industry 4.0 concept) will play the leading role in the future. Highly complex, automated production machines and robots are networked with each other and throughout a company. This creates multi-site, flexible production systems, which not only produce automatically, but which also control themselves as well as service and maintain themselves to a great extent. The consulting company PwC estimated in a recent study that German industry will invest an average of 3.3 percent of its annual sales in Industry 4.0 solutions over the next five years. This corresponds to almost 50 percent of the planned new equipment investments and an annual investment of more than 40 billion euros relative to the entire German industry.

In order for Industry 4.0 applications to function, companies must invest in IoT platforms, among other things, which connect the machines to the Internet as well as safeguard, analyze and control them and provide the necessary interfaces for access to applications and other systems. In a survey conducted among 385 IT decision makers primarily from the manufacturing sector in autumn of 2017 by IDG, 57 percent of the respondents stated that IoT platforms are an indispensable technology. It is already used by approx. 22 percent of respondents. In combination with IoT, those surveyed cited security technologies (53 percent) and cloud computing (48 percent) as also essential. In the same study, 64 percent of respondents estimated the importance of IoT for their own company as "very high" or "high".

The best of two worlds: IT and automation in production

Nevertheless, the manufacturing sector is considered as only "moderately" digitalized with 42 index points, according to the Monitoring Report Wirtschaft Digital. According to the investigation conducted by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, this industry is consequently lagging significantly behind comparatively highly digitalized sectors such as the information technology and telecommunications industry and providers of financial and insurance service.

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This lagging behind has various causes, and the high complexity of digitalizing production is certainly one of them. Digitalization presents two main challenges for industry: the digitalization of production and the digitalization of business models and processes.

The digitalization of production is the focus of automatica 2018. This involves linking complex, highly-automated production machines and robots "intelligently" with state-of-the-art IT and Internet connectivity to get the best of two worlds: the low cost of mass production with substantial customer proximity and customization of solutions for craft enterprises or factories.

IT2Industry, the subject area of automatica, consequently brings together two worlds: IT and automation. In this area, something is actually growing together now, which belongs together in times of digitalization. In the subject area IT2Industry, not only relevant software and hardware providers, integrators and consultancies are exhibiting, but there will also be intensive discussions about robotic automation, big data, cloud, security and of course IoT. The exhibitors include both traditional IT vendors such as Trend Micro Deutschland and proALPHA Business Consulting as well as companies that offer practical industry 4.0/IoT applications or platforms, for example, Essert, WidasConcepts, fabrikado and SW Schwäbische Werkzeugmaschinen.