



PODCAST EPISODE TRANSCRIPTION

Episode Summary:

In this second-of-three episodes Tom Bailey and Bill Barkovitz (President at Tri-Sen) discuss integrated turbine control. Specifically, why people still specify disintegrated systems, and commercial benefits of an integrated solution

Tom: Hi, and welcome to be Turbomachinery Controls Podcast where, we'll be informally discussing turbomachinery controls and turbine safety-related questions and topics. Opinions expressed here are our own and not necessarily those of Tri-Sen. I'm Tom, and I'm with Bill Barkovitz, President here at Tri-Sen.

Bill: Hey, Tom.

Tom: Hey, Bill. In this episode, we'll follow up on our last podcast, where we talked about integrated turbine control. At Tri-Sen, we deliver a lot of integrated control solutions where the compressor controls, the turbine control, the auxiliaries are integrated into one PLC platform.

But, we also, on occasion, deliver these disintegrated systems where the compressor controls and the auxiliary controls, and the turbine control are not integrated into the same platform.

And following up on our last podcast - where we talked about the technical benefits of integrating the control systems in one platform - how come we're still asked to provide disintegrated solutions?

Bill: In my experience, it's a combination of lack of knowledge because perhaps the company that is buying it does not have their own turbomachinery controls group, a central group. If you look at some of these midstream companies that their staffs are quite small, and they do not have a lot of expertise. So they may be just going off some specifications that they got from somebody else, or perhaps a vendor came in and told them, "Hey, you should do XYZ," and they don't know any better.

Tom: So... that's a marketing problem. Apparently, we are not communicating the benefits of an integrated system well enough, at least not to those people.

Bill: Well, in addition to the messaging, the other thing that we see is oftentimes, oil and gas companies in certain countries, especially state-owned companies, who have had specifications that have been around for a long time and they are very difficult to change. So you end up with a design philosophy that's thirty years old.

Another reason why I believe we still see disintegrated systems in specifications is because of how greenfield projects are executed and that-- and it has been around for a long time, and that is end-users will go to an engineering firm, asked the engineering firm to write the specifications. And then from there, go to the OEM and so on and so forth.

If you're an engineering firm and you've done twenty ammonia plants, and someone comes to you and says, "Hey, design this ammonia plant," guess what? You're going to use a design that you already have. So the current model, the model that has been around for a long time, is really not conducive to innovation because to want to reuse things, companies in general are going to want to reuse what they have.

Tom: Okay. So that's why we are still delivering disintegrated systems. For this next part, [can] we discuss the financial benefits of an integrated system?



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Bill: Well, if you look at some of the things that Jim touched on already in terms of having multiple devices and multiple boxes that you have to deal with, there are commercial implications to that.

Let me just back up for a minute, starting out with; you have your initial cost when you're first building a facility or expanding, and you are putting in the turbomachinery.

So, if you look at legacy designs, they are going to have, let's say, for example, an ethylene plant. You have three main trains - turbine compressor trains. Each one of those with a legacy disintegrated type design is going to have a speed controller, a compressor controller, a PLC for auxiliaries, and probably a separate safety system.

So you are talking four maybe five systems that you have got to pay [for] upfront when in fact, for the past twenty-five years, a lot of vendors have been offering integrated systems where you can put all of that functionality into a very highly reliable system - [with] at least three to four of those functions into one [PLC].

Safety really depends on the client and what their philosophy is.

So you have got that initial outlay where you could be paying twice as much for an "old" disintegrated type system, and then going forward in terms of maintaining it, you're going to start it up, where you're going to have multiple field service engineers from each vendor come in all at the same time.

Anytime you have problems, you are going to be calling in somebody from each different vendor. You've got to train all of your technicians on the different platforms. You have to maintain spare parts of each different platform...

So it starts adding up; with the initial outlay and then going forward. There's clearly a commercial advantage to going with an integrated type system.

Tom: Well, there it is then. And that is it for this episode. Drop us an email at turbomachinerycontrols@tri-sen.com and let us know what you got on your mind.

Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time.

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