Written by Gary Mintchell
Monday, 28 May 2012 17:54

Asset-management tools keep proliferating as suppliers place information technology (IT) applications into service to help owner/operators manage their assets in a more intelligent way.

I recently had an opportunity to catch up with Erik Udstuen, Business Leader for Software and Services at GE Intelligent Platforms. I wanted to know more about GE IP combining its acquisitions of SmartSignal and CSense with organic development to create a business that brings together data, predicting, prognostics and diagnostics into “process tools for the enterprise.”

The company’s developers, according to Udstuen, worked on the organic part for two years, reworking recording, reporting and diagnostics toward an asset-intelligence solution. This included collaborating with other GE businesses that work with GE Energy to monitor gas-turbine fleets around the world. The idea is to not only alert operators about pending failures, but also work with customers for process optimization.

Udstuen explained that the SmartSignal patent portfolio on prognostics, among other technologies, emphasizes monitoring major pieces of equipment and alerting on an anomaly. CSense, a South African-based company that focuses on deeper analytics, had developed a suite of tools including neural net, fuzzy logic and other core machine-learning technologies into a machine-learning environment with deep analytics. “SmartSignal focused on failures,” he pointed out, “CSense on optimization/process performance.”

The combination of the three streams into one offering solved the problems of building a massive historical database and finding the needle in the haystack: important information needed by operators in real time. Udstuen said that in the current example of 1800 turbines, each might collect 10,000 measurements. The number of technicians in Atlanta, though, is quite small. Thus, the software analytics must sift the data for the important information.

“Our vision is to be the world-class remote-monitoring platform across many industries,” Udstuen noted. With 60% of the North American power-gen market today, power generation and oil and gas are big industries for GE. Given the fact that oil and gas is mainly upstream right now, he told me, “We’re expanding power-generation capability globally and pushing into the oil and gas midstream.” **MT**

Gary Mintchell, gmintchell@automationworld.com , is Co-Founder and Editor in Chief of Automation World
magazine and blogs at www.garymintchellsfeedforward.com.

Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF