

# Designing Smart Products for the Internet of Things

## *CIMdata Highlight*

Earlier this month, Automation Alley, Michigan's leading nonprofit technology and manufacturing business association, hosted a group of southeast Michigan industry representatives to a "Tech Takeover" focused on "Designing Smart Products for the Internet of Things (IoT)." This event, which was sponsored by Fisher Unitech, set the stage for why and how products need to be designed for the rapidly evolving IoT world, where things are smart and connected. Automation Alley was the perfect setting for the event. Their focused efforts on innovation and technology, entrepreneurship, and talent development, among other things, have been defined to provide actionable intelligence that helps members grow and prosper in the digital age. Those in attendance, including Fisher Unitech, are some of those companies with which Automation Alley is collaborating.

This Tech Takeover, which is one in a series of technology oriented 2-hour events held on a regular basis, was kicked off by Peter Bilello, CIMdata's President. During his presentation, he stressed how digitalization is transforming products from physical goods and tangible services, and in many cases data is becoming the "product." Often, as he stated, the rate at which products and services are being bought and installed for the data they generate or collect is increasing, especially as companies and customers alike, are realizing that smart, connected products can enhance product-related experience in existing markets, and create new opportunities across a wide spectrum of industries. He further explained how manufacturing companies of all shapes and sizes need to be able to design and deliver smart, connected IoT-enabled products to be successful. Finally, he stressed that many product companies need support to navigate the evolving IoT standards landscape and security issues while optimizing their products and value chains to thrive in this new world, and this where companies like Fisher Unitech excel.

The second speaker of the event was David Hofer, a Fisher Unitech Electrical Technical Specialist and Certified Interconnect Designer (CID). Mr. Hofer used the opportunity to introduce the audience to Fisher Unitech—one of the world's largest technology providers of 3D design software tools and 3D printers—and how Fisher Unitech has a long history helping its clients innovate. Mr. Hofer's presentation, entitled: "Designing Smart Products on a Unified Platform," provided the audience with a concrete example of how a unified design platform can enable the multi-disciplinary design required to deliver smart, connected products. His example illustrated the back and forth collaborative effort required among mechanical, electrical, and PCB designers and how a unified platform, such as the SOLIDWORKS design platform that they sell and support from Dassault Systèmes can be used to streamline this interaction. Mr. Hofer clearly illustrated the stark difference between the old disconnected way multiple design disciplines have traditionally tried to work together and the new highly collaborative way they can synchronously work together on a platform like what Fisher Unitech can enable with SOLIDWORKS and the other solutions it provides.

The overall tone of the Tech Takeover was one of opportunity and possibilities. Opportunities associated with the design, manufacturing, delivery, and support of smart, connected IoT-enabled products is substantial and with companies like Fisher Unitech helping, companies can get access to and education on the tools required to be successful.

## About CIMdata

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