



TAKING CONTROL

Press automation controller acts as central intelligence for stamping machines, helping them to communicate

Pressroom prima donnas—mechanical, hydraulic and servo machines—hold court when it comes to stamping processes, while the press control, the heart of the operation, is often the unsung hero.

Increasing demand for IIoT connectivity, automation and the need to quickly store, recall and back up large amounts of data has led one company to develop a press automation controller that is creating some star power of its

own. Wintriss Controls Group, Acton, Massachusetts, introduced its SmartPac Pro at Fabtech 2018.

At the show, “We saw significant interest from current customers and new prospects seeking a powerful level of press

Stamping/Presses



SmartPac Pro can be built into a stamping machine's control panel or provided in a pendulum configuration.



control capability," Wintriss Controls President Mark Hatch says. The company designs and produces automation and safety products for the stamping and metal-forming industries.

"The call for newer technology and a higher level of communication dictated the need for innovation in press controls," says Jim Finnerty, product manager for Wintriss. "Fabricators can't just rely on old technology to run their presses anymore. It has to communicate with the outside world."

Streamlining

SmartPac Pro gives operators dual-core processors, user-configurable dashboards, unlimited tool setups and the ability to connect machines and collect unbiased data in real time. The control system is also able to "talk" to a vast array of other

controllers and presses.

"Controls and stamping machines can no longer operate as islands unto themselves," says Finnerty. Research finds that manufacturers weren't eager to add another screen to their already overburdened presses. Between coil and servo feeds and lubrication systems, "one could light up a whole plant with screens."

SmartPac Pro takes the place of multiple screens by serving as a centralized repository for data required to run the press and its ancillary equipment. A Wonderware hosting option allows the automated press controller to run independently created third-party HMIs for associated automation. It can be built into a stamping machine's control panel or provided in a pendulum configuration.

"Recently a customer of ours installed a

new lube system on their press," Finnerty says. "They complained that the system required extra steps, including identifying part specifications to call up the right lube profile. SmartPac Pro can do it automatically. Whether it's a pick-and-place cell, stand-alone or multi-press line, it doesn't matter. The press controller can automatically make any changes the part requires."

Wintriss consulted with engineers and customers but also spent time talking with press operators to get their feedback about features they would like to see on a press control.

"Conventional controllers typically have one main menu on the screen that shows speed or angle position, for example," says Finnerty. "When I looked at what operators were doing, I almost always saw them using three or four screens at the same time."

“ Controls and stamping machines can no longer operate as islands unto themselves. ”

Jim Finnerty, Wintriss Controls Group

Wintriss equipped SmartPac Pro with an icon system that allows operators to customize their own dashboards by dragging and dropping the information they want. Once an operator creates his or her own “home page,” it can be stored.

Making it simple

A new tool summary screen stores the contents of each programmed setup on one screen with space for operators to add notes regarding each job as needed. “Fabricators are running more jobs than ever,” says Finnerty, “so they need more memory.” SmartPac Pro can store an unlimited number of tool programs that are searchable. But data isn’t the only thing the controller stores.

Fabricators also need backup. “We did something simple,” he continues. “We installed a USB port on the exterior of the control, which allows the operator to copy the tool settings to a thumb drive.”

It can take hours to load processing data for each part, says Finnerty. But “in the event a plant has a power outage, they know they aren’t going to lose anything.”

With the Info Center option, the SmartPac Pro can retrieve from a shared location, tool or part specific items such as videos of proper setup procedures or photos taken of quality problems.

Built-in messaging systems mean managers can communicate with operators remotely from any smart device. Jobs programmed into one controller can also be shared with other networked SmartPac Pro controllers.

Easy to upgrade

Stampers don’t need to have a new press to take advantage of the latest controller. “We’ve put this controller on a 100-year-old press,” Finnerty says. “We can retrofit SmartPac Pro on any press model. And we don’t have to rip everything apart in order to network machines, controllers, ancillary equipment and any other apparatus on the network. The controller works off one interface. Users input part data into SmartPac Pro and it automatically sets up the entire press cell to run parts at the right specifications.”

Upgrading is also easy for companies that run SmartPac 1 and 2 controls on their presses. “We didn’t throw the baby out with the bathwater,” Finnerty says. “We kept existing features familiar to

operators and then added enhancements and new features. Companies that upgrade to SmartPac Pro won’t have to retrain personnel either.”

Looking ahead, Finnerty sees servo press technology continuing to grab market share but notes, “we will still be monitoring performance criteria like tonnage to track tool wear, processing and die status.”

Wintriss recognizes the importance of communication. The supplier’s ShopFloorConnect OEE and data collection software—forerunners of SmartPac Pro— have been collecting downtime and production efficiency data from factory floor machines for more than a decade.

“We realized early on if we can’t communicate with every every machine to collect data real time across industries, we won’t time across industries, we won’t be useful,” he says.

FFJ

Wintriss Controls Group LLC,
Acton, Massachusetts, 800/586-8324,
www.wintriss.com.



The Best
Got Better



Wintriss is pleased to announce the launch of our new flagship press automation controller - the SmartPAC PRO. The PRO includes all features of the original SmartPAC series of controls, with many exciting additions:

- Vivid Touch Screen Interface
- User-Configurable Dashboards
- Mobile App for Remote Access
- Unlimited Job Storage
- External USB Port for Memory Backup, Scanners, and Other Devices
- Compatible with all SmartPAC Modules Including ShopFloorConnect OEE Software
- Installation-Friendly Removable I/O
- New Enclosure w/Optional Industrial Pendant Arm

Unmatched Communications and Networking capabilities including optional integration with Wonderware®

SmartPAC PRO | WINTRISS

For additional information about SmartPac Pro, call us at 800-586-8324 (US and Canada), 978-268-2700, or visit us at www.wintriss.com

©2018 Wintriss Controls - All Rights Reserved.
Wonderware® is a registered trademark of Schneider Electric Software.