Safety Report Supports AspenTech's Strategy for Polymer Advanced Control Solutions

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Leading European task force report on safety critical systems highlights risks of applying neural networks in process control

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 22, 2004-- Aspen Technology, Inc. (NASDAQ: AZPN) today announced that its strategy for polymer advanced control solutions has been supported by the conclusions of a recent safety report. The report was published by a leading European task force, and highlights the risks of applying neural network software in manufacturing process control systems. The report identifies significant safety risks associated with using neural network process models to directly influence valve movements on chemical processes, and recommends that more appropriate technologies should be used.

The task force was set up by EUNITE (European Network of Excellence on Intelligent Technologies for Smart Adaptive Systems), a body created by the European Union to share knowledge and promote best practices in the application of "intelligent" software technologies. The task force, which was made up of recognized European specialists in the field, had the objective of making recommendations about the use of "intelligent" systems in safety-critical applications.

"In other safety-critical industries, such as automotive and medical, it has been possible to identify and address some of the risks associated with neural networks in control," said Professor Paulo Lisboa, Liverpool John Moores University, who was Chair of the task force. "The task force report concludes that the similar safety risks associated with manufacturing process control systems need to be directly addressed with alternative technological approaches."

The conclusions of the report support AspenTech's strategy for non-linear process control, which has been based on developing a different set of technologies rather than applying neural network-based systems. Non-linear controllers are required to address the complex process behavior found in the polymers industry, particularly during product transitions.

"The conclusions of the report issued by EUNITE clearly support the decision made by AspenTech four years ago not to pursue a non-linear advanced control strategy based on neural networks," said Steve Pringle, Senior Vice President of AspenTech's Manufacturing/Supply Chain business unit. "The result of our decision was the development of the innovative technologies used in our polymer production control solution, which avoid the safety risks associated with neural networks in process control."

About AspenTech

Aspen Technology, Inc. provides industry-leading software and implementation services that enable process companies to increase efficiency and profitability. AspenTech's engineering product line is used to design and improve plants and processes, maximizing returns throughout an asset's operating life. Its manufacturing/supply chain product line allows companies to increase margins in their plants and supply chains, by managing customer demand, optimizing production, and streamlining the delivery of finished products. These two offerings are combined to create solutions for enterprise operations management (EOM), integrated enterprise-wide systems that provide process manufacturers with the capability to dramatically improve their operating performance. Over 1,500 leading companies already rely on AspenTech's software, including Aventis, Bayer, BASF, BP, ChevronTexaco, Dow Chemical, DuPont, ExxonMobil, Fluor, GlaxoSmithKline, Shell, and Total. For more information, visit www.aspentech.com.

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