

## **WITS Chairman Update**

### **June 2016**

It's been eight months now since I started my two-year stint (or should I say sprint!) as the WITS Chairman and I've been busy working with the Protocol Standards Association (PSA) developing a plan of what we need to achieve during my time in post.

I think it would be fair to say that the main focus of the PSA since 2010, when the WITS-DNP3 protocol project completed, has very much been on maintaining the protocol, preventing it from fragmenting and managing the on-going technical developments requested by users.

Adoption by users has largely been as expected with Thames Water, Severn Trent Water, United Utilities, Northern Ireland Water & Northumbrian Water all deploying WITS-DNP3 compatible Telemetry Master Systems and a plethora of different RTUs. The majority of the remaining Water & Sewage Companies have plans to adopt WITS-DNP3 at sometime in the near future; Anglian Water will be next and will start deployment imminently. The remainder are linking deployment to the replacement or upgrade of their master systems.

As you know one of the principle aims of developing WITS-DNP3 was to introduce interoperability between master systems and field devices and encouragingly we continue to see a slow but steady stream of vendors developing the protocol into their remote devices.

However, the PSAC has not been without criticism. We are seen as operating as a clique and not engaging regularly with our membership, not developing and communicating a clear strategy and not addressing some of the perceived barriers to entry for new vendors.

So what is the plan.....

Well firstly we've documented a clear two-year strategy, more on that below. It's clear to me that if the protocol is to continue to deliver the original benefits (interoperability, competition, resilience & security) then it needs to be adopted by as many users and vendors as possible. To understand how we can make this happen we've started engaging with members. This is focused initially at users (i.e. water companies) with the purpose of clearly understanding where WITS-DNP3 fits into their individual telemetry strategies. Users will then be invited to complete a set of comprehensive questions that will further develop the PSA strategy. This process has started, so if you're a user you can expect a call from us in the coming weeks.

So I mentioned above that we've produced a two-year strategy, it consists of the following seven areas:

- 1 Create a clear development strategy enabling vendors to bring WITS-DNP3 capable devices to market
- 2 Maintain on-going development of the protocol aligned to users requests and requirements
- 3 Develop clear guidelines on WITS-DNP3 security aligned to CPNI best practice
- 4 WITS-DNP3 to have a developing presence in other countries
- 5 Majority of UK Water Companies to have adopted WITS-DNP3 as their first choice protocol for remote field devices
- 6 Maintain a clear definition for users regarding where WITS-DNP3 fits into their individual company telemetry strategies
- 7 Ensure the PSA has the correct membership to allow main strategy objectives to be achieved

Against each of the strategy items a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been produced that will allow us to provide clear progress in each area. The strategy items and associated KPIs will shortly be appearing on the WITS website <http://www.witsprotocol.org>

Finally, if we're to really engage with our membership and ensure WITS-DNP3 continues to develop and deliver benefits there's nothing better than getting together to talk face to face.

It's been a couple of years since we held our last forum so we've decided it's time to hold another one with the aim of updating everyone on developments against our strategy, plus other exciting IT led protocol opportunities that we've been exploring. The exact date will be announced shortly so you can put placeholders in your diary, but expect it to be mid October in Peterborough.

Thank you for reading my newsletter, if you'd like to discuss anything with me please feel free to call or email me and I look forward to seeing you in October.

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