

Developing smart services in the cloud

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More and more manufacturing companies are looking to build on their success by expanding their core business to include services. Particularly promising are smart services, which provide intelligent ways of connecting people, things and data. As part of an EU-funded project entitled Manufacturing Service Ecosystem (MSEE), a total of 19 partners had a hand in designing a cloud-based software platform that helps companies develop smart services.

In a future shaped by Industry 4.0, smart services will open up new ways for manufacturing companies to involve customers and simplify how machines and devices are operated. The idea of smart services includes digital services that use the Internet to connect to internal or external value chains and so support data- and services-based business models such as sharing services.

Service lifecycle management for smart services

As part of the MSEE project, Fraunhofer IAO has created a service lifecycle management software tool that helps develop and offer services – from the initial idea through to implementation. It's possible, for instance, to provide details of a particular service idea in a web portal and have customers give their feedback using their smartphones. The conceptual design phase begins with technology-independent business process modeling and ends with the technology-dependent modeling and implementation of mobile apps for cell phones or tablets.

Two companies have provided examples of how the service lifecycle

management tool can be used: Belgian shirt manufacturer Bivolino used it to develop a tablet app that customers can use to design and order made-to-measure men's shirts. And Dutch service provider TPVision put together an app that tailors what the Ambilight system of your Philips television does when you're watching a soccer match: The system reacts to what is going on in the match, which brings a captivating, stadium-like atmosphere into your very own living room.

Smart services – key components of Industry 4.0

For manufacturing companies, smart services are a key component in expanding connectivity among products and services, which in turn enables them to offer services that are tailored even better to individual target groups. What's more, the cloud-based platform makes it easier to develop, produce and monitor their services.

More information: Research project: Manufacturing Service Ecosystem (MSEE): www.msee-ip.eu/

Service Engineering and Lifecycle Management for IT-Services: www.researchgate.net/publication/269332646

Manufacturing Service Ecosystem: Achievements of the European 7th Framework Programme FoF-ICT Project MSEE: Manufacturing Service Ecosystem: www.researchgate.net/publication/268475293

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