Tata Steel versiondog Case Study

versiondog helps Tata Steel Reduce Downtime

Producing steel economically in Europe requires manufacturers to use the very latest equipment and technology to optimize production. Production downtime must be kept to an absolute minimum and, when unavoidable, must be as short as possible. At Tata Steel, the change management and version control software versiondog has become a proven and effective means of combating downtime.

Tata Steel is one of the world's most geographically diversified steel producers, with manufacturing plants in 26 countries and commercial operations in more than 35 countries. In Europe, it is the second largest steel maker.

To manufacture steel competitively in Europe, maintenance departments must react quickly when necessary. versiondog change management software has played a key role in helping Tata Steel maintain a competitive advantage for some time now. versiondog was introduced at Tata Steel in 2011 at its Ijmuiden plant in the Netherlands. Nearly all production processes at Ijmuiden are continual and need to be kept running 24/7.

versiondog is used on all production lines in Ijmuiden to make their ambitious production goals a reality.

Using versiondog in Multiple Business Units

Tata Steel plants are run by individual business units that each have a high degree of autonomy After seeing the benefits of versiondog in Ijmuiden, the Tata Steel internal service provider (named HTD) decided to make versiondog available on the central network for individual Tata Steel business units to opt-in to. Each business unit can choose to take advantage of versiondog on a subscription basis and can use versiondog to meet their unique needs.

"That's because different units are involved in different kinds of production." explains Hassan El Haddad, the Technical Automation Specialist at Tata Steel's HTD.

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"But despite that, they still all use versiondog, and that just shows how flexible the system is. The fact that there are no rules set centrally also tends to lead to different units using versiondog in different ways. How they use the software is up to each individual unit, but part of the essence of versiondog is that you never lose any data," he adds, "and you always document all changes, so there is no real need to impose any bureaucracy on the system."

Automatic Backups with versiondog

There are 18 units and around 200 users with access to versiondog at Tata Steel. Depending on the needs in each production area, backups are made daily, weekly, or monthly. Tata Steel runs daily backups for about 150 components that are most critical. When new machinery is installed, backups are initially made more frequently. When it is confirmed that everything is running smoothly and reliably, the interval can be extended. Fortunately, setting up and changing backup jobs in versiondog is a very straightforward process.

"In the past, we used to make backups for the sake of making backups," recalls El Haddad. "With the number of devices we have, that was a huge waste of time. Now, our teams know when a change has been made and when a backup is necessary."

Some of the units backup their networked devices automatically. Others do so manually because they have a lot of stand-alone machinery with devices that are not networked. One of the many advantages of the versiondog system is that it supports both automatic and manual backup routines equally well.

"However versiondog is used, the benefits are the same. We always know who changed what and why. Centralized documentation of changes is of tremendous value," El Haddad said.

Clarity and Security with versiondog

versiondog also makes it easy to ensure your network is secure. Satisfying the various security requirements of different production plants is another area in which versiondog offers a high degree of flexibility. Tata Steel's HTD can easily grant and manage access rights centrally, according to the needs and wishes of each individual unit.

"With versiondog, we always know the current status of our production plants. versiondog makes our work easier and saves us time." Central data storage, easily comprehensible documentation of all changes and Smart Compare (i.e. graphical or text-based detail comparisons of versions) all lead to vastly improved clarity and certainty.

The Bottom Line for the Tata Steel versiondog Case Study

How much time and money has Tata Steel saved using versiondog? Hassan El Haddad couldn't say exactly. "It is as difficult to quantify in euros and cents as is the benefits of having a smartphone," he said.

El Haddad went on to explain how a substantial improvement in their work comes from knowing the condition of the production equipment - that it makes preventative maintenance much easier.

"The more we know about our machinery, the better we are able to maintain it. What's more, we have more data available for analysis, and we can use that to improve our processes. That's what the Industrial Internet of Things is going to be about, but for us, it is here today," El Haddad said.

The main goal of introducing versiondog was to reduce downtime. That goal has been achieved. El Haddad said, "we now know exactly which version of any control program is the one currently in use, we don't just think we know which one it is."

versiondog has changed the change management culture at Tata Steel. That might sound like quite an assertion, but Hassan El Haddad is adamant.

"We now approach problems and tasks differently. Our people now primarily see the opportunities that change offers, not just the risks," he said. "They appreciate the workload reduction, the smoothing of workflow, and the certainty that versiondog provides. That is why versiondog is not simply a tool. It has become a core element of our maintenance culture."

In conclusion, El Haddad said, **"versiondog gives you end-to-end clarity on what changes have been made. You can't get better quality than that!"**

ABOUT AUVESY

AUVESY (**AU**tomated **VE**rsioning **SY**stems) is a global market leader in version control and data management for automated production. The company has grown steadily since it was founded in 2007, with its North American headquarters located in Grand Rapids, MI and its global headquarters located in Landau, Germany.

CONTACT US

146 Monroe Center St NW Suite 1210
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Tel. +1.616.888.3770
Email info@auvesy.com
Web www.auvesy.us

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