INTERNET CONTROL SYSTEM AND METHOD

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention is related in general to the field of network control systems. More particularly, the invention is related to an Internet control system and method.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a fully automated environment, appliances that change the various parameters of the environment can be inked to a control area network (CAN) and a controller. The appliances may include heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, lighting systems, audio-visual systems, telecommunications systems, security systems, surveillance systems, and fire protection systems, for example. One or more easy-to-use user interface, such as a touch panel, may be electronically linked to the control area network to accept user input and display current system status. Panja, Inc. of Dallas, Texas designs and manufactures such networked appliance control systems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, a system and method of Internet control network is provided which eliminates or substantially reduces the disadvantages associated with prior control systems.

In one aspect of the invention, the boundaries between the Internet and the control area network are made transparent and the Internet becomes a device on the control area network. The Internet is controllable by user input entered on the user interface, such as touch panel. The Internet is further capable of receiving commands from the master controller in the control area network.

In another aspect of the invention, Internet applications such as web browsers and applications executing on web servers of information content providers become devices on the control area network. The Internet applications are capable of sending commands to and receiving commands from the control area network.

In yet another aspect of the present in invention, a communication protocol is provided. The communication protocol comprises a packet protocol. The packet protocol has a protocol field for indicating the type of protocol, a length of data field for listing the length in bytes of the data field, a data field containing sub protocol data, and, a checksum for determining the integrity of the packet.

In yet another aspect of the invention, a dynamic message protocol generator is provided to enable a scripting language such as VBScript or JavaScript capable of directly communicating on any TCP/IP network connection.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, reference may be made to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a simplified top-level block diagram of a system and method of coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a more detailed block diagram of a system and method of coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 3 is a more detailed block diagram of the processes and communications between a web server and an Internet appliance server for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 4 is a more detailed block diagram of the Internet appliance server processes for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 5 is a more detailed block diagram of the Internet appliance server software device emulator processes for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 6 is a flowchart of a process in which a content provider is a control area network device according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 7 is a flowchart of a process in which an Internet application is a control area network user interface according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 8 illustrates a block diagram of a control system in accordance with the teachings of the present invention;

FIGURE 9 is a block diagram of a control area network device in accordance with the teachings of the present invention;

FIGURE 10 is a block diagram of routing components of a control area network master;

FIGURE 11 is an exemplary packet for messages in accordance to teaching the present invention;

FIGURE 12 is an exemplary message structure in accordance to teaching the present invention; and

FIGURE 13 is an exemplary message structure in accordance to teaching the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIGURE 1 is a simplified top-level block diagram of a system and method 10 of Internet control system which couple one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to the teachings of the present invention. The implications of employing system and method 10 of the present invention are the ability to communicate with, control, and be controlled by one or more Internet nodes or Internet applications that act as one or more devices in a control system connected by a control area network (CAN). These Internet applications may include web browsers, web server applications of information content providers, and email applications. In other words, the geographical and communication protocol boundaries are transparent between a local control area network and the Internet, so that the Internet, web information content providers and web browser applications become devices in the control system. By definition, a device in the control system can send control commands to and/or receive control messages from a master controller on the control area network. Hereinafter, the word Internet may be also used to refer to an Intranet or the World Wide Web and vice versa.

System 10 includes a control network portal 12 coupled between the Internet 22 and one or more control area networks 30 and 31. Control area networks 30 and 31 are local area networks operating under transport protocols such as Ethernet, and AXLink and PhastLink of Panja, Inc. (Dallas, Texas), the assignee of the present invention, that interconnect a variety of devices, appliances and/or equipment. The underlying network connectivity 34 may be wired, wireless, power line carriers, or any suitable transmission medium. Coupled to control area networks 30 and 31 are a plurality of devices, appliances and/or equipment, including control area network user interfaces (CAN UI/F) 35, master controllers 36, and Internet appliances 37-39. Some

devices may be coupled to control area networks 30 and 31 via additional intermediate communications devices, such as an RS 232 controller (not shown).

Control area network user interface device 35 is any device that is capable of receiving user input and displaying or indicating control network status. For example, a touch panel, a computer terminal with a monitor, keyboard and pointing device, and any device with similar functionalities may serve as control area network user interface 35. As described in detail below, with the use of control area network portal 12 of the present invention, Internet applications are also capable of functioning as control area network user interface devices without the use of custom and dedicated applications on the user's end.

Master controller 36 is generally a CPU-based controller that controls the communications among user interface 35 and Internet appliances 37-39. It is operable to receive user inputs received by user interface devices, such as commands, and instruct the appropriate Internet appliance to act according to the command. Master controller 36 may also poll each device in control area network 30 periodically to monitor its status. The system status and/or the status of each device may be sent to control area network user interface devices for display.

Internet appliances 37-39 are devices that can receive commands from master controller 36 and operate or act according to the command. Internet appliances 37-39 may include equipment that affect or monitor the various parameters of the premises. For example, Internet appliances 37-39 may include heating and air conditioning, lighting, video equipment, audio equipment, sprinklers, security cameras, infrared sensors, smoke detectors, etc. in a residential or commercial control area network. Household appliances, such as a hot tub, fireplace, microwave oven, coffee maker, etc. may also be

Internet appliances coupled to the network. Internet appliances 37-39 may also be capable of providing a current status of its operational state to master controller 36, such as on/off, temperature settings, current ambient temperature, light intensity settings, volume settings, threshold settings, and predetermined alphanumeric strings reflective of operational states.

Master controller 36 is also operable to receive user input from nodes of the Internet 22 via control network portal 12. Connected to Internet 22 are content providers 25 and 26, which may also function as control area network user interface devices. Content providers 25 and 26 are typically web servers that generate and provide static and/or dynamic information and content in the form of web pages. Content provider applications executing on the web server are able to mine data stored in databases (not shown). The web pages are typically developed with hypertext markup language (HTML), and various other scripting languages and programming environments such as Microsoft® Active Server Pages (ASP), Common Gateway Interface (CGI), Internet Server Application Programming Interface (ISAPI), JAVA, ActiveX, Cold Fusion, etc. that make the web pages more dynamic and interactive.

Also connected to the Internet 22 are web browsers 23 and 24 that may also serve as control area network user interfaces. Web browsers 23 and 24 are application programs that can be used to request web pages from content providers 25 and 25 and decode the web pages. Web browser applications include NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR® and MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER®, for example. Typically, a user executes a web browser application on her personal computer and accesses the World Wide Web via a dial-up connection to an Internet service provider. The Internet or World Wide Web may also be accessed via other means such as cable modems and digital subscriber lines (DSL). The user makes a request for a particular web page or

particular web site by entering or specifying a uniform resource locator (URL). The URL is associated with an Internet protocol (IP) address of the specified web site. Every computer connected to the World Wide Web and Internet has a unique IP address. This address is used to route message packets to specific computers and users. Internet protocol or IP is the message transport and communications protocol of the Internet and World Wide Web.

When the web browser requests a certain URL, a connection is first established with a web server of a content provider that is addressed by the URL. A hypertext transport protocol (HTTP) request is then issued to the web server to download an HTML file. The web server receives the request and sends a web page file to the web browser, which decodes the file to display information in specified format on the screen. Web pages with dynamic content provided by gateway interfaces such as CGI and ISAPI are executable applications that are run by the web server upon user request. The executing gateway application is able to read parameter information associated with the request and generate an output in the form of an HTML file in response to the parameter values. Another way to add dynamic and interactive content to web pages uses ASP. ASP scripts are server-side executable scripts that are directly incorporated in the HTML web pages. Upon request for the page, the web server executes the ASP script in response to input parameter values and generates the web page with dynamic content.

Using control network portal 12, users may access control area networks 30 and 31 via web browsers 23 and 24 accessing web pages provided by control network portal 12 or value-added web pages provided by content providers 25 and 26. For example, a user who has a control area network deployed in her luxury residence to control various aspects of the home environment may use a web browser application to remotely monitor her home. She

may change the temperature setting to decrease energy use, for example, because she will be leaving on a business trip straight from work. She may also use the surveillance cameras to visually ensure security has not been breached. She may even be able to remotely program her VCR to record certain favorite programs that will be broadcast while she is away.

An example of value-added web pages provided by content providers is the provision of an interactive version of the television programming web page, www.tvguide.com. A user may request this web page, determine available program choices, and click on a certain program. Options may be provided to enable the user to turn on the television and tune to a particular channel scheduled to broadcast the selected program or to program the VCR to record the selected program.

Another example of value-added web pages provided by content providers is the provision of a secured web page that an electric company may access to slightly raise the temperature settings of the air conditioning systems of its participating customers in anticipation of high demand brown out conditions. Yet another example is a web page that a security company may use to access, monitor and control the security, surveillance and fire protection systems of its customers.

FIGURE 2 is a more detailed block diagram of a system and method 10 of coupling one or more control system to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention. Control area network portal 12 may include a web server 13 coupled to the Internet 22. Web server 13 is also coupled to an Internet appliance (IA) server 14, which may also be coupled to a control network server 40. Control network server 40 is coupled to control area network 30 that links several appliances and systems, such as fire protection systems 50, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems 51, lighting systems 52,

audio and visual systems 53, and security systems 54. Control area network 30 is also coupled to user interface devices 55 and master controller 36.

It may be noted that control network portal 12 may be implemented by a single stand-alone system that has sufficient memory and processing power or several separate systems with distinct functions as shown in FIGURE 2. Web server 13 is operable to receive requests of web pages from web browser 23 and to respond by generating and providing the requested web pages. The information content of the web pages may be dynamically obtained by communicating with IA server 14, which is operable to communicate with master controller 36 via control network server 40 to obtain status and other information. Control network server 40 is used only if there is protocol conversion or other control issues needed to operate the control area network. It may be thought of, logically, that IA server 14 is directly coupled to the network and functions as a device on the network. Commands entered at a web browser are sent to web server 13, which relays the commands to master controller 36 via IA server 14 and control network server 40. Master controller 36 then instructs appropriate appliances and/or systems in the control network to act according to the received command.

FIGURE 3 is a more detailed block diagram of the processes and communications between a web server 13 and an Internet appliance server 14 for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention. Web server 13 may include one or more CGI processes 70 for responding to CGI requests from the Internet and one or more ASP processes 76 for responding to ASP requests form the Internet. It is contemplated by the present invention that other processes able to handle other extensions to HTML or other types of requests may also be provided. It is also contemplated by the present invention that web

server 13 may merely pass through the received IP message if extension processing is not required. Further, a special protocol process, such as an Internet control system protocol (ICSP) process, which takes the IP message from the Internet and forms a message of the type and protocol understood by IA server 14. The ICSP protocol is designed by Panja, Inc. The CGI, ASP and other processes may be dynamically spawned when there is a request of the corresponding type received by web server 13. ASP process 76 may include a dynamic protocol generator 82, which enables web pages provided by web server 13 to generate, send and receive TCP/IP messages to IA server 14 and the Internet. In other words, dynamic protocol generator 82 enables a scripting language such as VBScript or JavaScript to be capable of directly communicating on any TCP/IP network connection. Details of dynamic protocol generator 82 are described below.

IA server 14 includes a CGI handler 72, which communicates with CGI process 70, and an ASP handler 78, which communicates with ASP process 76. Handlers 72 and 78 are operable to provide a translation function from IP to a protocol used in the control area networks, such as PhastLink or AXLink in Panja, Inc. control area networks. IA server 14 is operable to spawn a software logical or virtual device that is representative of or associated with a physical device directly connected to a control area network or a content provider coupled to the Internet. Multiple software logical devices may be connected to a single control area network or content provider, if needed. Devices, whether physical or logical, are assigned a system identifier (system ID) and a unique device identification number (device ID) used to indicate the destination or origination of messages. One or more protocol converters 92 may be provided to translate from the protocol used internally in IA server, such as ICSP, to other protocols used in the control area

networks, such as AxLink or PhastLink. A protocol converter is not necessary if the protocols employed in IA server 14 and a control area network 30 are the same.

FIGURE 4 is a more detailed block diagram of the Internet appliance server processes for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention. Coupled to CGI handler 72 and ASP handler 78 is a software device emulator 90 that is operable to spawn one or more software logical devices 86, which are software representations of devices connected to the control area networks or content providers connected to the Internet. Software device emulator 90 communicates with a protocol converter layer 92 which provides a protocol translation function between the IA server protocol and the control area network protocol, if they are different. A CAN transport protocol client 94 is also provided to communicate with the control area network coupled to IA server 14.

By the use of software logical devices, Internet applications such as web content providers appear to IA server 14 no different than devices connected to a control area network. Therefore, it appears that Internet applications like content providers on the web are able to directly communicate with the master controllers of the control area networks to issue commands to devices in the control area networks. Similarly, Internet applications appear to be devices on the control area network that can be controlled by the master controller. The master controller is able to issue commands to the Internet applications.

FIGURE 5 is a more detailed block diagram of the Internet appliance server software device emulator processes 90 for coupling one or more control systems to the Internet constructed according to an embodiment of the present invention. Emulator 90 includes an Internet control system protocol (ICSP) software device core 100.

Software device core 100 communicates with the web server via a device application program interface (API) 110. Software device core 100 also communicates with the control area networks via control area network I/O queues 112. Emulator 90 also includes a CAN input message processor 102, a device state maintenance process 104 and a device state storage process 106. CAN input message processor 102 is operable to receive input messages and parse the fields of the message to determine a message destination. The message destination specifies a software logical device to receive the message. Recall that software logical device may represent a device on a control area network or an Internet application on the Internet. Device state maintenance process 104 is operable to determine a current state of a software logical device and to determine a next state in response to the processed message. Device state storage 106 is operable to store state transition logic of each software logical device for use by device state maintenance process 104.

Referring to FIGURE 6, which shows a flowchart of an embodiment of a process 150 in which a command entered at a CAN user interface is delivered to a content provider on the Internet according to the present invention. A user enters data on a user interface device coupled to a control area network, as shown in block 152. The user interface device may be a touch panel or a computer terminal with a monitor, keyboard and mouse, for example. The user may enter an alphanumeric string, click on a button icon on the screen, push a button on the touch panel, or effect any other suitable input. The data entry may require the user to also submit the entered data, such as pushing a Submit or Enter button, as shown in block 154. The user interface device then forms a control system message incorporating the entered data and the sender and recipient of the message, as shown in block 156. The master controller then sends the message

onto the control area network, as shown in block 158. The sender and recipient are specified by a unique combination of system ID and device ID. The recipient may be determined by the data entered by the user. For example, the user may have pushed a button associated with updating the web page of the content provider. The content provider is previously assigned a unique combination of system ID and a device ID.

The master controller on that network receives the message and processes the message, as shown in block 160. An output channel state associated with the submit button of the user interface device is turned ON by the master controller to indicate that the data is being sent. The ON state of the output channel of the submit button is conveyed to the user interface, which may highlight the submit button or display a predetermined character string as a means of feedback to the user. In block 164, the master controller then forwards the message to the protocol converter associated with the recipient software logical device in the IA server. The protocol converter then translates the message from the sender protocol to the recipient protocol, as shown in block 166. Note that protocol conversion is not necessary or is null if the sender protocol is the same as the recipient protocol.

In block 168, the translated message is then sent or otherwise conveyed to the software logical device that represents the recipient convent provider. The recipient software logical device receives the message and stores the message content in a data structure at a specific location specified by an index value, such as a number, which corresponds to the channel number of the recipient software logical device, as shown in block 170. The stored message is accessible by specifying the index number. The software logical device then changes the state of an output channel of the same channel number to ON, as shown in block 172. It may be noted that each device, whether physical or logical, may have one or more

channels, each indicative of a specific function, parameter or property. Further, each channel may have an input and an output channel state.

Periodically or at its discretion, the recipient Internet application checks the output channel states of the software logical device associated therewith, as shown in block 174. The Internet application recognizes that an output channel state is ON and therefore the data associated with that channel has been changed. In block 176, the Internet application queries the software logical device for the data by specifying the index value. In response, the software logical device sends the message to the Internet application, as shown in block 178. The Internet application receives the message and uses and acts according to the data in an appropriate manner. The software logical device turns OFF the input channel state, as shown in block 182, and turns ON the output channel state of the same index value, as shown in block 184.

The master controller recognizes a change in the input channel state of the software logical device representing the Internet application, as shown in block 186. In response, the master controller turns OFF the output channel of the user interface device, which is used to notify the user that the requested action has been completed, as shown in block 188. A change in the color or shade of the displayed button or the display of a predetermined string may be used to inform the user, as shown in block 190. The process ends in block 192.

FIGURE 7 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a process 200 in which an Internet application functions as a user interface in the control system according to the teachings of the present invention. In block 202, a user enters and submits data on an Internet application. The Internet application may be an application executing on a web server of a web content provider, a web browser, or any other suitable Internet-based application program.

The Internet application may be operable to receive an alphanumeric string entered by the user, the activation of a displayed image or icon, or a combination of keystrokes entered by the user. The Internet application then requests connection to the control system by specifying an IP address and port number of the recipient software logical device, as shown in block 204. The web server is connected with the Internet application and receives the IP message containing the entered data, as shown in block 206. The web server then instantiates one or more processes to handle the received message, as shown in block 208. For example, a CGI process may be provided to handle CGI scripts or an ASP process may be provided to handle ASP scripts. In the case of a web browser connecting to the web server, the instantiated process extracts data from the IP message received from the Internet application and forms a message of a protocol used by IA server 14, such as ICSP. In the case of a content provider connecting to the web server, the message is preferably already in the form of a ICSP message transported by IP, which does not require protocol conversion. The spawned process then sends the ICSP message to the software logical device associated with the recipient device in the control system, as shown in block 210. The recipient is identified by a system ID and a device ID.

The software logical device then stores the message content in an indexed position in a data structure, as shown in block 212. The software logical device turns ON the input channel associated with the index number, as shown in block 214. The master controller becomes aware of the input channel state change by periodically polling the channel states, as shown in block 216. The master controller may alternatively be triggered to query the channel states by some mechanism other than time. The master controller then requests the message content at the specified index number be sent to it, as shown in

block 218. The software logical device then sends the message content to the master controller, which forwards the message content to the physical device in the control system, as shown in block 220. The device receives the data and acts accordingly, as shown in block 222. The master controller may also send the same data to a user interface in the control area network to update the display, as shown in block 224. The software logical device then turns OFF the input and output channels, as shown in block 226. The OFF states of the input and output channels notifies the Internet application, which may periodically poll the software logical device to determine the input and output channel states, that appropriate action has been taken in response to the entered data, as shown in block 228. The process ends in block 230.

It may be noted that the use of input and output channel states to notify the recipient that data is available and the sender that an action has been completed is merely provided herein as an example. Other means may be used for this function.

FIGURE 8 illustrates a block diagram of a control system 310 in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. FIGURE 8 shows an Internet web servers 312 coupled to a plurality of databases 314. Web servers 312 are coupled to the Internet 316 via communication lines 313. While the Internet is used as a network, the web servers could be connected to any systems or wide array networks, local area networks or Intranets. Communication lines 313 can be any direct or wireless connection.

Internet 316 is coupled to an Internet appliance server 320. Internet appliance server 320 is coupled to a plurality of control area networks 322. Each control area network has one master 324 and a variety of control area network devices 326 which can include touch panels, audio/visual equipment, and the like. Control area

network devices 326 are equivalent to the Internet appliances described previously.

Web servers 312 are computers having a processor, such as an INTEL or Motorola processor, and memory. Web server 312 runs a web server program operable to provide web pages to a requesting user, the requesting user typically using a web browser.

Databases 314 are operable to store information that can be used by web servers 312 to provide content that may be required by a control area network device 326. This can include information such as CD lists, television listings, sports data, stock information or any other type of information that may be used by control access network device 326.

Internet 316 is the collection of networks located across the world interconnected for user and computer communication, including the part of the Internet known as the World Wide Web. While system 310 shows web server 312 connected to the Internet 312, web servers 16 can be connected to any system of wide area networks, local area networks or Intranets.

Internet appliance server 320 is a device operable to act as a gateway between devices connected to the Internet 316 and control area network 322. Internet appliance server 320 is, in one embodiment operable to translate messages generated by web server 317 to messages useable by control area network devices 326.

In system 310, devices 326 communicate with other devices on the same control area network 322 or different control area networks 322. Devices 326 also receive messages generated outside the control area network 322 or generated by the master 324. All message sent by device 326 is routed through the master 324 on the control area network 322.

FIGURE 9 is a block diagram providing an exemplary control area network device 326 in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. Device 326 comprises the communication line 440 coupled to a communication jack 442, which, in one embodiment is an RJ45 jack. A message handler 444 is coupled to communication jack 442. Message handler 444 is further coupled to one or more ports 448. Each port 448 comprises one or more levels 450 and channels 452. Each port 448 may be connected to an RS-232 connection 454 which in turn connects to a nine-pin connector 460 and a RS-232 IO interface 464, for example. Each level 450 is connected to a voltage regulator 456 which in turn connects to a two-pin interface 462 and provides a voltage out 467. Each channel 452 is connected to a relay 458 which in turn connects to a two-pin connector 461 and provides a contact out 468.

In operation, messages in the first protocol, such as Phastlink+, PL+ or ICSP developed by Panja, Inc. are received by a communication line 440 from a source such as a master controller 324. Message handler 444 receives the messages. Message handler 444 is responsible for receiving the message and sending the message to the appropriate port 448.

Port 448 is a control output or input on the device that is discreetly addressable. An example of a port could be an infrared generator device. There can be multiple ports in a device. Each port 448 would be numbered separately. Ports 448 can communicate with the outside world through an RS-232 interface 464, different interfaces or no interface at all.

As part of a port 448, channels 452 are provided. A channel is a part of port 448 and can take on a binary value of either on or off. In one embodiment, each port 448 can have up to 65,535 channels 452. Channels 452 are typically connected to relays 58 which can be in an on or

off condition. Relay 458 is connected to a contact out 468, which allows on or off control of whatever port 448 is connected to. Channels 448 are bi-directional and can be input channels, output channels, or input/output channels.

Levels 450 are in some ways similar to channels. The main difference is that levels can take on any number of values instead of just a binary 0 or 1. Typical uses for levels include setting volume level, setting light level, etc.

Thus, the purpose of message in this protocol is to send and receive controls for devices, which are attached to control area network as well as send and receive status and routing information. For example, for the device shown above, a message could be sent to device 326, which would turn on a television, set a volume level for the television, and then perhaps scroll some information across television screen. This could be accomplished by a message sent to device 326 and interpreted by message handler 444. The message may have a command to turn the television set on and that would be sent to the channel, which would then control the relay to turn the television on. To set the volume level, the message command to set the level at a certain value is received at message handler 444. The command goes to level 450 and then to the voltage regulator 456 which in turn would then set the level by two-pin connector 462. The scrolling message might then go through the port 448 through the RS-232 port and displayed on the television connected to serial port DB-9 460.

A device can be a user interface or a controlling device, or both. User interfaces are things such as touch panels, one way wireless handheld transmitter, or custom panels. The controlling device provides the control methods for a device. For example, IR generators are

controlling devices that can control a VCR, television, or other item. Each device in the system has its own unique device number, as well as port numbers and channels and levels that could be accessed.

FIGURE 10 illustrates a block diagram of routing components of a master controller 324. These components comprise a connection manager 530, which provides connections between higher level managers and lower level drivers. ICSP connection manager 530 is coupled to a phastlink driver 510 via a PL to ICSP protocol conversion 522. An AXlink driver 512 is coupled to ICSP connection manager 530 via an AXlink to ICSP protocol conversion 520. Phastlink and Axlink are exemplary protocols used on control access networks.

Additionally, an RS-232 driver 514 is coupled to ICSP connection manager 530 via a PPP driver 518 coupled to a TCP/IP stack 524 and an IP port connection manager 526. ICSP connection manager 530 is coupled to ethernet driver 516 via TCP/IP stack 524 and IP port connection manager 526. RS-232 driver 514 provides connectivity to RS-232 devices and Ethernet driver 516 provides connectivity to devices attached to an Ethernet connection.

ICSP connection manager 530 is coupled to ICSP message dispatcher 532. ICSP message dispatcher 532 can send messages to different managers including a diagnostic manager 534, a device manager 536 or a configuration manager 538.

PL to ICSP protocol conversion 522 converts from phastlink (PL) to ICSP and vice versa. In some embodiments PL to ICSP protocol conversion 522 is operable to de-multiplex incoming multiple messages into multiple messages destined for ICSP connection managers and multiple outgoing messages into a single packet for PL devices. AXlink to ICSP protocol conversion 520 converts

messages between devices that use the AXlink protocol to ICSP protocol and vice versa.

ICSP connection manager 530 is operable to provide routing functionality. ICSP connection manager can route to local masters, local devices, remote masters and remote devices. Routing is accomplished by first routing a message to the appropriate system master and then to the correct device. The destination will be contained in the header of the packet as discussed below.

IP port connection manager 526 is operable to manage all IP connections, except standard Internet protocols. Standard Internet protocol 528 provides for standard protocols such as HTTP, FTP, SMNP and SMTP.

ICSP message dispatcher 532 determines the category of the message, such as diagnostic message, device specific messages and configuration messages and routes them to their specific message managers. These include the diagnostic manager 534, the device manager 536, and the configuration manager 538 and any other managers.

FIGURE 11 is a diagram of an exemplary packet for messages in accordance to teaching the present invention. The first field is a protocol field 670, and in one embodiment, one byte size. Protocol field identifies the format of the data section of the packet with some protocol. Length of data field 672 indicates the total number of bytes in the data portion of the packet. Flag field 674 can be one of two types of flags. One is a broadcast flag. The broadcast flag will send a broadcast message to all devices on a network. A newbie flag is placed in flag field 674 when a device is added to the network. This will then cause a response from the master indicating that it received the message from the newbie device.

Destination system field 676 allows for the addressing of the message to reach a specific system. A

communication algorithms to correlate in the original message with its acknowledge and response.

Message command field 692 and message data 694 represent the actual message being sent in the packet. Each packet is decoded by reading the message field 692 and performing the appropriate functions. Some commands are designed for communication between a device manager located in the master and other ones are intended for communication with the connection manager located in the master. TABLE A below lists exemplary messages that are valid between a device manager and the device or master. First column lists the command, the second column lists the value of the command, the third column lists the valid response from the device for that command, and the fourth column lists the valid response for the master of that command and the fifth column lists the description of the command. For example, command input channel OFF status is sent from a device to a master, which sends the input channel off status to the master. The value of the command sent in the command value of the command field 692 is 0x0085. Because the device is sending the message there is no response for the device. The master response is 0x0001, which is the command for acknowledge and the description of the command indicates that the input channel is in the off status. Thus, this command would be sent by a device after being queried by the master to say that its input channel is in the off status, or it can be sent unsolicited. The master would then send back an acknowledgment.

TABLE A

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Acknowledge	0x0001	None	None	Confirmation of message receipt.
Nak	0x0002	None	None	Indicates failed delivery of a message.

system is, in one embodiment, a complete control area network with a single master. Thus, message can be directed to one of many different control area networks. In one embodiment control system field is two bytes in size. Destination device field 678 lists the number the device that the message is being sent. The device range can be anywhere between 0 and 65,535. Destination port field 680 lists the specific port of the device that the message is destined for. In one embodiment the protocol supports up to 65,535 ports on the device.

Source system field 682 is the number of a system where the message originates. Source device field 684 lists the device that the message originated from. If the device number is 0, this indicates that the master of that control area network is the enunciator of the communication. Source port field 686 lists the port where the message originated.

An important aspect of addressing is the sequencing of messages. There are certain messages and circumstances under which messages must be delivered in the order intended. This requires that each device be guaranteed the correct order for delivery. However, while messages destined for a certain device must be delivered in the order intended, out of order messages are possible when destined for different devices.

Allowed hop count field 688 indicates how many hops can occur before the message is purged from the system. Each time a message passes through a master, the allowed hop count field is decremented by one and checked to see if it reaches zero. Once the count reaches zero, the master generates an error message indicating that the message has not reached the sender with an air. Message I.D. field 690 contains the unique identification number for a message. This message I.D. is used by low level

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Input Channel ON Status (PUSH) (Device->Master)	0x0084	Error	0x0001	Input channel turned ON status message (PUSH).
Input Channel OFF Status (RELEASE) (Device->Master)	0x0085	Error	0x0001	Input channel turned OFF status message (RELEASE)
Output Channel ON (Master->Device)	0x0006	0x0086, 0x0088, or 0x0001	0x0086	Output turn ON message. If device does not support channels, then message is only ACKed.
Output Channel ON Status (Device->Master)	0x0086	Error	0x0001	Output turned ON status message.
Output Channel OFF (Master->Device)	0x0007	0x0087, 0x0089, or 0x0001	0x0087	Output turn OFF message. If device does not support channels, then message is only ACKed.
Output Channel OFF Status (Device->Master)	0x0087	Error	0x0001	Output turned OFF status message.
Input / Output Channel ON Status (Device->Master)	0x0089	Error	0x0001	Input and Output channel turned ON message.
Input / Output Channel OFF Status (Device->Master)	0x0089	Error	0x0001	Input and Output channel turned OFF status message.
Feedback Channel ON	0x0018	N/A	N/A	Indicates the feedback state the master is maintaining. Only generated for Diagnostic purposes.
Feedback Channel OFF	0x0019	N/A	N/A	Indicates the feedback state the master is maintaining. Only generated for Diagnostic purposes.
Level Value (Master->Device)	0x000A	0x008A or 0x0001	0x008A	A level value changed. If device does not support levels, then message is only ACKed.
Level Value (Device->Master)	0x008A	Error	0x0001	A level value changed.
String (Master->Device)	0x000B	0x0001	0x0001	Used to transfer a "String".
String (Device->Master)	0x008B	Error	0x0001	Used to transfer a "String".
Command (Master->Device)	0x000C	0x0001	0x0001	Used to transfer a "Command".
Command (Device->Master)	0x008C	Error	0x0001	Used to transfer a "Command".
Request Level Value (Master->Master)	0x000E	Error	0x008A or 0x0001	Requests the status of specified level value. If the level does not exist, the response message is ACK.

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Request Output Channel Status (Master->Master)	0x000F	Error	0x0086, 0x0087, or 0x0001	Requests the status of specified Output channel or ALL Output channels that are ON (if channel = 0). If the request is for all channels and none are on then response is ACK.
Request Port Count (Master->Master)	0x0010	Error	0x0090	Request number of ports used by device. Assumed 1 if no response.
Port Count (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0090	Error	0x0001	Number of ports used by device. Sent upon reporting by a device if it has more than one Port. Sent by a master as a response to Request Port Count.
Request Output Channel Count (Master->Master)	0x0011	Error	0x0091	Request number of output channels used by specified port on device. Assumes 256/port if no response.
Output Channel Count (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0091	Error	0x0001	Number of channels used by specified port. Sent upon reporting by a device/port if it has more than 256 channels. Sent by a master as a response to Request Output Channel Count.
Request Level Count (Master->Master)	0x0012	Error	0x0092	Request number of levels used by specified port. Assumes 8/port if no response.
Level Count (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0092	Error	0x0001	Number of levels used by specified port. Sent upon reporting by a device/port if it has more than 8 levels. Sent by a master as a response to Request Level Count.
Request String Size (Master->Master)	0x0013	Error	0x0093	Request number of bytes supported by device/port for a single SEND_STRING. Assume 64 bytes if no response.
String Size (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0093	Error	0x0001	Number of bytes/string supported by device. Sent upon reporting by a device/port if it supports than 64 byte strings. Sent by a master as a response to Request String Size.

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Request Command Size (Master->Master)	0x0014	Error	0x0094	Request number of bytes supported by device/port for a single SEND_COMMAND. Assume 64 bytes if no response.
Command Size (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0094	Error	0x0001	Number of bytes/command supported by device. Sent upon reporting by a device/port if it supports than 64 byte commands. Sent by a master as a response to Request Command Size.
Request Level Size (Master->Master)	0x0015	Error	0x0095	Requests the data types supported by a level. Assume BYTE (Type 0x10) if no response.
Level Size (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0095	Error	0x0001	Highest data type supported for a level. Sent upon reporting by a device if it supports more than BYTE (Type 0x10) data types. Sent by a master as a response to Request Level Size.
Request Status (Master->Master)	0x0016	Error	0x0096	Request status of the device and or Port.
Status (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x0096	Error	0x0001	Sent by device to update master of Status. Sent by master as a response to Request Status.
Request Device Info (Master->Device)	0x0017	0x0097	0x0097	Type of device, version, etc including sub-devices.
Device Info (Device->Master)	0x0097	Error	0x0001	Response to above.
Device Info EOT (Master->Device)	0x0098	None	None	Indicates that all previously requested Device Info has been transferred.
Request Master Status (Device->Master) (Master->Master)	0x00A1	Error	0x0021	Request the status of a system master.
Master Status (Master->Device) (Master->Master)	0x0021	0x0001	0x0001	Master status. Used to indicate various states of a Master.

The "Value" field from TABLE A is placed in the "MC" (MessageCommand) field of the packet. Any Message Data required is placed in the variable length "MD" (MessageData) field.

The following is a more detailed description of exemplary commands.

Acknowledge

This message is generated by the master or device to confirm receipt of a message sent. The MessageID field must match the original message's MessageID and the Response bit should be set.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0001	Acknowledge Value
MD	<None>	Nothing

Nak

This message is generated by the master when the destination system/device for the message does not exist. This message indicates that a previous message was not routable by the master. The MessageID field must match the original message's MessageID and the Response bit should be set.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0002	Nak Value
MD	<None>	Nothing

Input Channel ON Status (Device->Master)

The Input Channel ON message is generated when a button is PUSHed or Input channel is turned ON from a device/port or a master.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0084	Input Channel ON Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Input Channel OFF Status (Device->Master)

The Input Channel OFF message is generated when a button is RELEASEd or Input channel is turned OFF from a device/port or a master.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description

MC	0x0085	Input Channel OFF Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Output Channel ON (Master->Device)

The Output Channel ON message is generated when an Output channel is turned ON from a master.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0006	Output Channel ON Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Output Channel ON Status (Device->Master)

The Output Channel ON Status message is generated when an Output channel is turned ON from a device/port. Note that when the master turns a channel ON, it assumes the channel is ON. Therefore, the device should not send this message in response to the channel being turned ON by the master.

Internally, this triggers an output event to occur in the Axcess language.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0086	Output Channel ON Status Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Output Channel OFF (Master->Device)

The Output Channel OFF message is generated when an Output channel is turned OFF from a master.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0007	Output Channel OFF Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Output Channel OFF Status (Device->Master)

The Output Channel OFF Status message is generated when an Output channel is turned OFF from a device/port. Note that when the master turns a channel OFF, it assumes the channel is OFF. Therefore, the device should not send this message in response to the channel being turned OFF by the master.

Internally, this triggers an output event to occur in the Axcess language.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0087	Output Channel OFF Status Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Input/Output Channel ON Status (Device->Master)

The Input/Output Channel ON Status message is generated when an Input/Output channel is turned ON from a device/port.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0088	Input/Output Channel ON Status Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Input/Output Channel OFF Status (Device->Master)

The Input/Output Channel OFF Status message is generated when an Input/Output channel is turned OFF from a device/port.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0089	Input/Output Channel OFF Status Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Feedback Channel ON

The Feedback Channel ON message is generated for diagnostic purposes only. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0018	Feedback Channel ON
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Feedback Channel OFF

The Feedback Channel OFF message is generated for diagnostic purposes only. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0019	Feedback Channel OFF
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Level Value (Master->Device)

This message is used to force a level value change from the master.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x000A	Level Value Change
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[9]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[10..n]	Value	Dynamically sized. Size indicated by MD[9].

The Value Type Specifier field specifies how the following data (MD[10..n]) is interpreted. The table below indicates the values of MD[9] as they correlate to data types.

ValueType Specifiers

Type	Specifier	# of Bytes
BYTE	0x10	1
CHAR	0x11	1
WIDECHAR	0x20	2
INTEGER	0x20	2
SINTEGER	0x21	2
ULONG	0x40	4
LONG	0x41	4
FLOAT	0x4F	4
DOUBLE	0x8F	8

The LevelType command is used to query a device to determine the dynamic range supported by the device. This information is then used to generate messages appropriate to the device.

Level Value (Device->Master)

This message is used to indicate, to the master, that a device/port/level value has changed.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x008A	Level Value Change
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[9]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value. Reference 2.2.5.3.13 Level Value (Master->Device) for an explanation of this and the next field.
MD[10..n]	Value	Dynamically sized. Size indicated by MD[9].

String (Master->Device)

The String message is generated by the master to communicate a String. The format of a String is similar to a "C Language" string, however, the semantics are different. A String in a control system context is used to generate a "control" message. This "control" message could cause a laser disc player to begin playing a disc, display a message to the user of the system, or any number of any other uses. The string will be converted,

as necessary, to any format that the device supports as determined by the StringSize message.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x000B	String Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of characters in string (i.e. number of elements, this is not the number of bytes)
MD[10..n]	String	Length characters. (n or n*2 bytes)

String ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

String (Device->Master)

The String message is generated by a device, sent to the master, to communicate a String.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x008B	String Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of characters in string (i.e. number of elements, this is not the number of bytes)
MD[10..n]	String	Length characters. (n or n*2 bytes)

String ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

Command (Master->Device)

The Command message is generated by the master to communicate a command string. The format of a Command is similar to a "C Language" string, however, the semantics are different. A Command in a control system context is used to generate a "control" message. This "control" message is generally intended to "command" the controlling device, not the controlled device. For example, a command to an RS232 port might enable XON/XOFF flow control. This command affected the controlling device, but not the controlled device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x000C	Command Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of characters in string (i.e. number of elements, this is not the number of bytes)
MD[10..n]	Command	Length characters. (n or n*2 bytes)

Command ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

Command (Device->Master)

The Command message is generated by a device, sent to the master, to communicate a Command string.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x008C	Command Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value.

MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of characters in string (i.e. number of elements, this is not the number of bytes)
MD[10..n]	Command	Length characters. (n or n*2 bytes)

Command ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

Request Level Value (Master->Master)

The Request Level Value message is generated by the master to request the level value of a level.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x000E	Request Level Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Output Channel Status (Master->Master)

The Request Output Channel Status message is generated by the master to request the status of a single Output Channel or status of all Output Channels.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x000F	Request Output Channel Status Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Channel	Unsigned 16-bit value. If zero then the request is for a status update for all channels on the specified port.

Request Port Count (Master->Master)

This message requests, from the destination device, the number of ports supported by the device. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device in the system has one port. If the device does not respond, the master assumes that it has one port.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0010	Request Port Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Port Count (Device->Master, Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request Port Count message above. It is sent by a device upon reporting if the device has more than one port.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0090	Port Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	Port Count	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Output Channel Count (Master->Master)

This message requests from the destination device, the number of output channel supported by the specified device/port. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device/port in the system has 256 channels.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0011	Request Output Channel Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Output Channel Count (Device->Master, Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request Output Channel Count message above. It is sent by a device/port upon reporting if the device has more than 256 channels.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0091	Output Channel Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

MD[7..8]	Output Channel Count	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Level Count (Master->Master)

This message requests, from the destination device, the number of levels supported by the specified device/port. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device/port in the system has eight levels.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0012	Request Level Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Level Count (Device->Master,Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request Level Count message above. It is sent by a device/port upon reporting if the device has more than eight levels.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0092	Level Count Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level Count	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request String Size (Master->Master)

This message requests the number of elements per string and the string types supported by the device/port. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device/port in the system supports 64 elements/string and only supports 8-bit character strings.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0013	Request String Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

String Size (Device->Master,Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request String Size message above. It is sent by a device/port upon reporting if the device/port supports more than 64 byte strings or more than 8-bit character strings. It returns the maximum number of elements/string the device supports and the types of strings supported.

Note that when transferring messages, the size of the message will be determined by the smaller of the maximum string size supported by the device and maximum packet size supported by the low-level bus protocol.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0093	String Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value. The String ValueType Specifiers supported are ORed together into this field.
MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value.

String ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

Request Command Size (Master->Master)

This message requests the number of elements per command and the string types supported by the device/port. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device/port in the system supports 64 elements/command and only supports 8-bit character arrays.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description

MC	0x0014	Request Command Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Command Size (Device->Master)

This message is the response, from a device, to the Request Command Size message above. . It is sent by a device/port upon reporting if the device/port supports more than 64 byte commands or more than 8-bit character commands. It returns the maximum number of elements/command the device supports and the types of strings supported.

Note that when transferring messages, the size of the message will be determined by the smaller of the maximum command size supported by the device and maximum packet size supported by the low-level bus protocol.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0094	Command Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value. The String ValueType Specifiers supported are ORed together into this field.
MD[8..9]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value.

String ValueType Specifiers:

Keyword Type	Data Type	Type Specifier	Size	Range
CHAR Arrays	"Normal" String	0x01	8-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of characters)
WIDECHAR Arrays	"Unicode" String	0x02	16-bit	Variable length strings (i.e. an array of WIDE characters)

Request Level Size (Master->Master)

This message requests a list of data types supported for the specified level. The initial assumption that the master makes is that each device/port/level only supports 8-bit unsigned values (BYTE Type 0x10).

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0015	Request Level Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Level Size (Device->Master,Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request Level Size message above. . It is sent by a device/port upon reporting if the device/port/level supports more BYTE (Type 0x10) levels. It returns a list of data types supported by Level.

Note that when transferring levels, the master will typecast from larger sized types to the largest type supported by the device. For example, if the users Axcess^2 program sends a FLOAT to a device that supports only BYTE,CHAR, and INTEGER types, the master typecasts the FLOAT to an INTEGER before sending to the device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0095	Level Size Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Level	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[9]	Count of ValueTypes	Unsigned 8-bit value. This is the count of bytes to follow where each byte represents a supported level type.
MD[10..n]	List of ValueTypes	Unsigned 8-bit array of ValueTypes.

ValueType Specifiers

Type	Specifier	# of Bytes
BYTE	0x10	1
CHAR	0x11	1
WIDECHAR	0x20	2
INTEGER	0x20	2
SINTEGER	0x21	2
ULONG	0x40	4
LONG	0x41	4
FLOAT	0x4F	4
DOUBLE	0x8F	8

Request Status (Master->Master)

This message requests, from the destination device, the status of the device or port.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0016	Request Status Code Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value. If port=0 then requesting status of device.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Status (Device->Master,Master->Master)

This message is the response from a master to the Request Status Code message above. . It is sent by a device/port if the device/port needs to update the master of a status change.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0096	Status Code Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	StatusCode	Unsigned 16-bit value. If port=0 then status of device instead of port.
MD[9]	ValueType Specifier	Unsigned 8-bit value. Type of StatusString.
MD[10..11]	Length	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of characters in string (i.e. number of elements, this is not the number of bytes)
MD[12..n]	StatusString	Length characters. (n or n*2 bytes)

Request Device Info (Master->Device)

This message requests device specific information from the specified device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0017	Request Device Info Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Device Info (Device->Master)

This message is the response to the Request Device Info message above.

Flag - A 16-bit bit field. Each bit indicates a unique aspect of functionality.

For each device and sub-device that contains re-programmable electronic components within the device, the following information is replied:

ObjectID - An 8-bit unique (within the device) identifier that identifies this structure of information. This is used to construct an internal device hierarchy for display to the user.

ParentID - An 8-bit value that references an existing ObjectID. If 0, then this object has no parent.

ManufactureID- A 16-bit value that uniquely identifies the manufacture of the device.

DeviceID - A 16-bit value that uniquely identifies the device type.

Serial number - A fixed length field 16 bytes long.

FWID (Firmware ID) - A 16-bit value that uniquely identifies the object code that the device requires.

Version - A NULL terminated text string that indicates the revision level of the re-programmable component.

DeviceID String - A NULL terminated text string that indicates the name or model number of the device.

Manufacturer String - A NULL terminated text string that indicates the name of the device manufacturer.

Extended Address Format - An 8-bit value that indicates the type of device specific addressing information to follow.

Extended Address Length - An 8-bit value that indicates the length of device specific addressing information to follow.

Extended Address - Extended Address as indicated by Extended Address Type and Length.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0097	Device Info Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	Flag	16-bit bit field. Bit 0 - If set, this message was generated in response to a button press while Identify mode is active.
MD[7]	ObjectID	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[8]	ParentID	Unsigned 8-bit value.
MD[9..10]	MfgID	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[11..12]	DeviceID	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[13..28]	SerialNumbe r	16 bytes of data. Format not defined yet.
MD[29..30]	FWID	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[31..n]	Version	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing a version string. Generally, in this format: "v1.00\0"
MD[n+1..p]	DeviceID String	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing a model number. Generally, in this format: "NXC-232\0" (NetLinx Card- RS232)
MD[p+1..q]	Manufacture String	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing the mfg.'s name. Generally, in this format: "AMX Corp/0"
MD[q+1]	Extended Address Type	8-bit value. Used to indicate type of extended address to follow.
MD[q+2]	Extended Address Length	8-bit value. Used to indicate length in bytes of extended address to follow
MD[q+3..r]	Extended Address	Extended Address as indicated by Extended Address Type and Length.

Extended Address Type

Type	Description
0x01	Neuron ID. Length will be 6 and address will be the 48-bit Neuron ID of the device.
0x02	IP4 Address. Length will be 4 and address will be the 4-byte IP address of the device.
0x03	AXLink Connection. Length must be 0.
0x13	RS232 Connection. Length must be 0.
All others	Reserved.

Device Info EOT(Master->Device)

This message indicates that all data (Device Info messages) have been sent as a result of a Request Device Info message. This message indicates to the requesting device that all Device Info information has been provided.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0098	Device Info EOT Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Master Status (Device->Master,Master->Master)

This message requests that the master respond with its status. Generally, Master Status message will be unsolicited, this message is included for completeness.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x00A1	Request Master Status Value
MD[1..2]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Master Status (Master->Device,Master->Master)

This message is the response to the Request Master Status message above, but more commonly will be sent by the master unsolicited.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0021	Master Status Value
MD[1..2]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Status	Unsigned 16-bit value treated as bit fields. See below.
MD[5..n]	StatusString	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing a text description of the status. For example, "Master Reset"

Master Status is defined as follows:

Bits 1 & 0 are encoded as shown in the table below.

Bit 1 State	Bit 0 State	Meaning
0	0	Reset When a device receives this status of the master all channels on the device should be turned off, all levels should be set to zero, and the device shall enter the "unconnected" state (see the Device & Master Communication Specification).
0	1	Reload When a device receives this status of the master, it must stop sending messages to the master until the master's status becomes Normal. No channels are turned off.
1	0	Undefined
1	1	Normal Upon entry in to the Normal state, the device must report that it is on-line and any channels that are ON, or non-zero levels must be reported to the master.

Bits 15-2: Undefined should be zero.

Diagnostic Manager

The following messages originate from or are destined for the Diagnostic Manager:

The Diagnostic Messages will be better specified during/after the Diagnostic Manager specification is complete.

Command	Value	Description
Internal Diagnostic String	0x0101	Used to display/convey a diagnostic message. It includes a severity level, module ID, and a string. These messages are generated internally within the master.
Request Diagnostic Information	0x0102	Registers the sending device with the diagnostic manager such that diagnostic information be sent the source device.
Request Devices On-line	0x0103	Master responds with Device Info message(s) for each device currently on-line and the number of ports for each device.
Request Devices On-line EOT	0x0109	Indicates that all on-line device information has been sent.
Request Device Status	0x0104	Master responds with a variety of messages that indicate the current state of the device.
Request Device Status EOT	0x010A	Indicates that all Device Status information has been sent.
Request Asynchronous Notification List	0x0105	Requests the entire list of device/ports currently in the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Asynchronous Notification List	0x0106	Contains a single entry from the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Add/modify asynchronous Notification List	0x0107	Adds or modifies an entry in the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Delete asynchronous Notification List	0x0108	Delete one or all entries in the Master's asynchronous notification list.

Internal Diagnostic String

This message is used by tasks within the master to log/display error or diagnostic messages.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0101	Internal Diagnostic String
MD[1..2]	Object ID	Unsigned 16-bit value. Values defined in the Constants & IDs specification document.
MD[3..4]	Severity	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..n]	Diagnostic String	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing a text description of the error. For example, "Self-test failed #2"

Request Diagnostic Information

This message is used by the IDE to request that diagnostic information be sent to the requesting device.

If any flag bits are set, unsolicited diagnostic messages of the specified type(s) will be sent to the device. If all bits are zero, then no diagnostic message will be sent to the device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0102	Request Diagnostic Information
MD[1..2]	Flag	Bit Field: 0 - Enable Internal Diagnostic Strings 1-15 - Undefined (must be 0)

Request Devices Online

This message is used by the IDE to request a list of online devices for the receiving NetLinx master. The master will respond with Device Info message(s) for each device currently online. In addition, it will generate a Port Count message for each device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0103	Request Devices Online

Request Devices Online EOT

This message indicates that all requested devices from the Request Devices Online message have been sent. This message is used by the IDE to determine when all online device information has been received.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0109	Request Devices Online

Request Device Status

This message is used by the IDE to request the status of the specified device. The master responds with Output ON messages for each output channel that is on, Feedback ON messages for each feedback channel that is on, etc. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0104	Request Device Status
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Device Status EOT

This message indicates that all of the Request Device Status information has been sent. This message is used by the IDE to determine when all device status information has been received.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x010A	Request Device Status
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used by the IDE to request the current asynchronous notification list from the master. The master generates a series of Asynchronous Notification List messages, one for each entry in the list, to the requesting device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0105	Request Asynchronous Notification List

Asynchronous Notification List

This message is generated by the master in response to the Request Asynchronous Notification List message. For each entry in the master's list, one of these messages will be generated. If there are no entries, then the number of entries field will be zero. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0106	Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Total Count	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the total number of entries in the list.

MD[3..4]	ThisIndex	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the item number beginning with 1. This will be incremented for each item until it equals Total Count.
MD[5..6]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[9..10]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[11..14]	Flag	32 Bit field (if the bit is set, the messages are enabled): Bit - 0: Online/offline messages Bit - 1: Configuration messages Bit - 2: Input channel changes Bit - 3: Output channel changes Bit - 4: Feedback channel changes Bit - 5: Level changes from device Bit - 6: Level changes to device Bit - 7: Strings from device Bit - 8: Strings to device Bit - 9: Commands from device Bit - 10: Commands to device Bit - 11: Status messages Bit 12-31: Undefined. Should be zero.

Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used to add an entry into the Asynchronous Notification List or modify an existing entry. The master will generate a Completion Code (Configuration Manager message 0x0213) message indicating success or failure of this command. A special sentinel value of Device=0, Port=0, and System=0 indicates that the flags should be applied to the global filter.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0107	Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..10]	Flag	32 Bit field (if the bit is set, the messages are enabled): Bit - 0: Online/offline messages Bit - 1: Configuration messages Bit - 2: Input channel changes Bit - 3: Output channel changes Bit - 4: Feedback channel changes Bit - 5: Level changes from device Bit - 6: Level changes to device Bit - 7: Strings from device Bit - 8: Strings to device Bit - 9: Commands from device Bit - 10: Commands to device Bit - 11: Status messages Bit 12-31: Undefined. Should be zero.

Delete Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used to delete an/all entr(y)/(ies) from the Asynchronous Notification List. The master will generate a Completion Code (Configuration Manager message 0x0213) message indicating success or failure of this command. A special sentinel value of Device=0, Port=0, and System=0 indicates that the global filter should be deleted. Another special sentinel value of Device=65535, Port=65535, and System=65535 indicates that all entries should be deleted.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0108	Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Connection Manager Messages

Table B lists commands between connection manager and devices. Again, the first column is the name of the command, the second column is the value of the command, the third column is the device response, the fourth column is the master response and the last column is the description of the command. For example, on the second row, if the blink command sent by a master to a device, the value of the command is 0X0502 and in response to that command the device says nothing nor does the master. The description of the command is given to all devices to make the LED blink. As this occurs, the master determines whether the device is online and sends back a visual indication.

TABLE B

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Ping Request (Master->Device)	0x0501	0x0581	0x0581	Requests a ping response from the destination device.

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Ping Response (Device->Master)	0x0581	None	None	Reply to the Ping Request. The master uses the response to confirm that the device is active in the system.
Blink (Master->Device)	0x0502	None	None	Periodically broadcast to all devices. Includes LED blink and other information.
Request Blink (Device->Master)	0x0582	Error	0x0502	Requests a Blink message. Intended to be generated by one master to another.
Dynamic Device Address (Master->Device)	0x0503	0x0001	0x0001	Assigned address response.
Request Dynamic Device Address (Device->Master)	0x0583	Error	0x0503	Request a dynamic address...use the Newbee flag.
Pass Through (Device->Master)	0x0584	Error	0x0001	Requests that strings from the specified device get sent to another specified device.
Request Notification (Master->Master)	0x0507	Error	0x0001	Requests notification of specific messages from a device.

Ping Request (Master->Device)

This message is sent by a master to request determine the presence of the specified device in the system.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0501	PingRequest value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Ping Response (Device->Master)

This message is the response to the Ping Request message above. The device responds with this message to inform the requestor that the device is still on-line.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0581	PingResponse value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	MfgID	Unsigned 16-bit value. The Manufacture ID as reported in the Device Info message for ParentID=0 and ObjectID=0
MD[7..8]	DeviceID	Unsigned 16-bit value. The Device ID as reported in the Device Info message for ParentID=0 and ObjectID=0
MD[9]	Extended Address Type	8-bit value. Used to indicate type of extended address to follow.

MD[10]	Extended Address Length	8-bit value. Used to indicate length in bytes of extended address to follow
MD[11..]	Extended Address	Extended address as indicated by Extended Address Type and Length.

Extended Address Type

Type	Description
0x01	Neuron ID. Length will be 6 and address will be the 48-bit Neuron ID of the device.
0x02	IP4 Address. Length will be 4 and address will be the 4-byte IP address of the device.
0x03	AXLink Connection. Length must be 0.
0x13	RS232 Connection. Length must be 0.
All others	Reserved.

Blink (Master->Device)

The blink message is a broadcast message that is transmitted to every device periodically. The time period of the message may be dependent upon the medium in which the message will be sent.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0502	Blink Value
MD[0]	Heartbeat Timing	Tenths of seconds between heartbeats.
MD[1]	LED	State of Bus LED and other Status. Bit 0 - Bus LED 0=OFF, 1=ON. Bits 1-6 Reserved. Bit 7 - Forced Device Unconfigure/Reset
MD[2]	Month	Current Date: Month 1-12
MD[3]	Day	Day 1-31
MD[4..5]	Year	Year 1999-65535 (Type:unsigned 16-bit)
MD[6]	Hour	Current Time: Hour 0-23
MD[7]	Minute	Minute 0-59
MD[8]	Second	Seconds 0-59
MD[9]	Day of Week	0=Mon, 1=Tues,…
MD[10..11]	Outside Temp	Outside Temperature (if available). (Type:signed 16-bit) If 0x8000, then temperature is not valid.
MD[12..n]	Text Date String	CHAR array, NULL terminated, Formatted as: "Thursday, June 10, 1999"

The time period for Blink messages is not determined at this time. Each device implementation may **not** require that the Blink message be periodically sent at any anticipated rate. The ideal rate will be determined based upon the quantity of bus traffic. It may, someday, even be determined dynamically.

The LED byte is a bit field. The LSB (bit 0) indicates the current status of the bus LED.

The MSB (Bit 7) is set when the master initially powers-up/on-line. In response to bit 7 being set, the receiving device should place itself in the off-line state, turn all channels off, and set all levels to zero (or prepare itself to send status updates as necessary to the master). The master shall send 3 consecutive blink messages with bit 7 set.

Request Blink (Device->Master)

This message requests from the destination master, a Blink message response. The response will not be a global response, it will be destined only to the requestor.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0582	ReqBlink Value
MD[1..2]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Dynamic Device Address (Master->Device)

This message is the response to the Request Dynamic Device Address message below. It returns a device number for "temporary" use by the requesting device.

The device can use this device number for as long as it has communication with the master. The returned device number may the one suggested by the device in the Request Dynamic Device Address message or may be different.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0503	DynDevAddress Value
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value. Newly assigned or Requested device number for the device's use.
MD[3..4]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value. The appropriate system number.

Request Dynamic Device Address (Device->Master)

This message requests a device number from a master. The *Newbee* flag must be set in the message header.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0583	Request Dynamic Device Address Value
MD[1..2]	ProposedDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. If possible for the device, is the last device number that this device used.
MD[3]	Extended Address Type	8-bit value. Used to indicate type of extended address to follow.
MD[4]	Extended Address Length	8-bit value. Used to indicate length in bytes of extended address to follow
MD[5..]	Extended Address	Extended address as indicated by Extended Address Type and Length.

Extended Address Type

Type	Description
0x01	Neuron ID. Length will be 6 and address will be the 48-bit Neuron ID of the device.
0x02	IP4 Address. Length will be 4 and address will be the 4-byte IP address of the device.
0x03	AXLink Connection. Length must be 0.
0x13	RS232 Connection. Length must be 0.
All others	Reserved.

Pass Through

This message requests that the Connection manager redirect strings coming from the specified source device to the specified destination device. This will also prohibit strings from the source device getting sent to the interpreter until the PassThrough is disabled. This message will cause an 'RXON' message to be sent to the source AXLink device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0584	Pass Through Value
MD[1..2]	SrcDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. Source AXLink device.
MD[3..4]	DstDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. Destination device address.
MD[5..6]	DstPort	Unsigned 16-bit value. Destination Device Port address.
MD[7..8]	DstSystem	Unsigned 16-bit value. Destination System Address.
MD[9]	Enable	Unsigned 8-bit value. Bit field: Bit 0 - 1=Enable pass through. 0=disable.

Request Notification

This message is sent by a master to request notification of specific messages that are received from OR sent to the specified device. Typically, the notification messages are Device Manager messages (specified above).

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0507	RequestNotification value
MD[1..2]	DstSystem	Unsigned 16-bit value. The destination system of this (RequestNotification) message.
MD[3..4]	DstDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. The specific source device of interest.
MD[5..6]	SrcSystem	Unsigned 16-bit value. The system requesting the notification messages.
MD[7..8]	SrcDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. The device requesting the notification messages.
MD[9..10]	MessageCount	Unsigned 16-bit value. Number of Messages in following list.
MD[11..n]	Messages	Array of unsigned 16-bit values. Each value identifies a specific message. For example, 0x000A indicates that any Level Value messages to or from Device should be sent to SrcSystem.

The following message command values are not actual messages, but rather virtual "commands" to the Notification Manager that function as follows:

0xFFFF - deletes all existing notification requests for the device from this master.

Diagnostic Manager

The following messages originate from or are destined for the Diagnostic Manager:

Command	Value	Description
Internal Diagnostic String	0x0101	Used to display/convey a diagnostic message. It includes a severity level, module ID, and a string. These messages are generated internally within the master.
Request Diagnostic Information	0x0102	Registers the sending device with the diagnostic manager such that diagnostic information be sent the source device.
Request Devices On-line	0x0103	Master responds with Device Info message(s) for each device currently on-line and the number of ports for each device.
Request Devices On-line EOT	0x0109	Indicates that all on-line device information has been sent.
Request Device Status	0x0104	Master responds with a variety of messages that indicate the current state of the device.

Request Device Status EOT	0x010A	Indicates that all Device Status information has been sent.
Request Asynchronous Notification List	0x0105	Requests the entire list of device/ports currently in the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Asynchronous Notification List	0x0106	Contains a single entry from the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Add/modify asynchronous Notification List	0x0107	Adds or modifies an entry in the Master's asynchronous notification list.
Delete asynchronous Notification List	0x0108	Delete one or all entries in the Master's asynchronous notification list.

Internal Diagnostic String

This message is used by tasks within the master to log/display error or diagnostic messages.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0101	Internal Diagnostic String
MD[1..2]	Object ID	Unsigned 16-bit value. Values defined in the Constants & IDs specification document.
MD[3..4]	Severity	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..n]	Diagnostic String	CHAR array, NULL terminated, containing a text description of the error. For example, "Self-test failed #2"

Request Diagnostic Information

This message is used by the IDE to request that diagnostic information be sent to the requesting device. If any flag bits are set, unsolicited diagnostic messages of the specified type(s) will be sent to the device. If all bits are zero, then no diagnostic message will be sent to the device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0102	Request Diagnostic Information
MD[1..2]	Flag	Bit Field: 0 - Enable Internal Diagnostic Strings 1-15 - Undefined (must be 0)

Request Devices Online

This message is used by the IDE to request a list of online devices for the receiving NetLinx master. The master will respond with Device Info message(s) for each

device currently online. In addition, it will generate a Port Count message for each device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0103	Request Devices Online

Request Devices Online EOT

This message indicates that all requested devices from the Request Devices Online message have been sent. This message is used by the IDE to determine when all online device information has been received.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0109	Request Devices Online

Request Device Status

This message is used by the IDE to request the status of the specified device. The master responds with Output ON messages for each output channel that is on, Feedback ON messages for each feedback channel that is on, etc. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0104	Request Device Status
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Device Status EOT

This message indicates that all of the Request Device Status information has been sent. This message is used by the IDE to determine when all device status information has been received.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x010A	Request Device Status
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Request Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used by the IDE to request the current asynchronous notification list from the master. The master generates a series of Asynchronous Notification List messages, one for each entry in the list, to the requesting device.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0105	Request Asynchronous Notification List

Asynchronous Notification List

This message is generated by the master in response to the Request Asynchronous Notification List message. For each entry in the master's list, one of these messages will be generated. If there are no entries, then the number of entries field will be zero. See the Diagnostic Manager specification for more information.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0106	Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Total Count	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the total number of entries in the list.
MD[3..4]	ThisIndex	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the item number beginning with 1. This will be incremented for each item until it equals Total Count.
MD[5..6]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..8]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[9..10]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[11..14]	Flag	32 Bit field (if the bit is set, the messages are enabled): Bit - 0: Online/offline messages Bit - 1: Configuration messages Bit - 2: Input channel changes Bit - 3: Output channel changes Bit - 4: Feedback channel changes Bit - 5: Level changes from device Bit - 6: Level changes to device Bit - 7: Strings from device Bit - 8: Strings to device

		Bit - 9: Commands from device Bit - 10: Commands to device Bit - 11: Status messages Bit 12-31: Undefined. Should be zero.

Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used to add an entry into the Asynchronous Notification List or modify an existing entry. The master will generate a Completion Code (Configuration Manager message 0x0213) message indicating success or failure of this command. A special sentinel value of Device=0, Port=0, and System=0 indicates that the flags should be applied to the global filter.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0107	Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[7..10]	Flag	32 Bit field (if the bit is set, the messages are enabled): Bit - 0: Online/offline messages Bit - 1: Configuration messages Bit - 2: Input channel changes Bit - 3: Output channel changes Bit - 4: Feedback channel changes Bit - 5: Level changes from device Bit - 6: Level changes to device Bit - 7: Strings from device Bit - 8: Strings to device Bit - 9: Commands from device Bit - 10: Commands to device Bit - 11: Status messages Bit 12-31: Undefined. Should be zero.

Delete Asynchronous Notification List

This message is used to delete an/all entr(y)/(ies) from the Asynchronous Notification List. The master will generate a Completion Code (Configuration Manager message 0x0213) message indicating success or failure of this command. A special sentinel value of Device=0, Port=0, and System=0 indicates that the global filter should be deleted. Another special sentinel value of Device=65535, Port=65535, and System=65535 indicates that all entries should be deleted.

Message and parameters:

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0108	Add/Modify Asynchronous Notification List
MD[1..2]	Device	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[3..4]	Port	Unsigned 16-bit value.
MD[5..6]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value.

Configuration Manager

The following messages originate from or are destined for the Configuration Manager:

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Set Device Number (Master->Device, Master->Master)	0x0201	0x0213	0x0213	Sets the device/system number of the receiving device.
Set Identify Mode/Address (Master->Device)	0x0202	None	None	Enables/Disables identify mode for the device and establishes the new device number.
Set Serial Number	0x0203	0x0213	0x0213	Sets the 16-byte serial number of the device.
File Transfer	0x0204	0x0204	0x0204	Contains file transfer information
Request IP Address List	0x0205	0x0206	0x0206	Requests the list of IP address the device will attempt to contact
IP Address List	0x0206	None	None	List of IP address
Add IP Address	0x0207	0x0213	0x0213	Add the specified IP address to the contact list.
Delete IP Address	0x0208	0x0213	0x0213	Delete an specified IP address from the contact list.
Set DNS IP Addresses	0x0209	0x0213	0x0213	Sets the DNS IP address list and domain name.
Request DNS IP Addresses	0x020A	0x020B	0x020B	Requests the DNS IP address list and domain name.
Get DNS IP Addresses	0x020B	None	None	Gets the DNS IP address list and domain name.
Set Ethernet IP Address	0x020C	0x0213	0x0213	Sets the IP address, subnet mask, and gateway.
Request Ethernet IP Address	0x020D	0x020D	0x020D	Requests the Ethernet interface's IP address, subnet mask, and gateway.
Get Ethernet IP Address	0x020E	None	None	Response to Request Ethernet IP Addrss.
Set Time & Date	0x020F	0x0213	0x0213	Sets the Time and Date.
Request Time & Date	0x0210	0x0211	0x0211	Requests the current Time and Date.
Get Time & Date	0x0211	None	None	Gets the current Time and Date.
Identify Mode/Address Response	0x0282	None	None	Response to Identify Mode/Address.
Restart	0x0212	0x0213	0x0213	Restart device or subset of device.
Completion Code	0x0213	None	None	For some messages, confirms successful completion or failure of a message.

Command	Value	Valid Response Messages From		Description
		DEVICE	MASTER	
Reserved Messages	0x02E0-0x02FF			Reserved message range.

Set Device Number

Used to set the Device number of un-configured devices.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0201	Set Device number.
MD[1]	Configuration Flags	Used to indicate the type of configuration and the validity of the following data.
MD[2..3]	Device Number	Unsigned 16-bit value. The specific device number to become.
MD[4..5]	System	Unsigned 16-bit value. The specific system number to set.

Configuration Flags

Bit Value	Type	Description
0x01	Device Field Valid	Device Number in data is valid and should be stored.
0x02	System Field Valid	System Number in data is valid and should be stored.
0x04	Future	
0x08	Future	
0x10	Future	
0x20	Future	
0x40	Future	
0x80	Erase all Current System/Device Settings	Erase current setting and return to default.

Set Identify Mode/Address

Places/removes the device into/from the Identify state. While the device is in the identify state, a press of the identify button causes the device to take on the specified Device/System. The device should respond with the Identify Mode/Address Response, report its old device as off-line, then report the new device as on-line.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0202	Set Identify mode
MD[1]	Flags	Unsigned 8-bit value. Bit 0: 0 - Disable Identify Mode 1 - Enable Identify Mode
MD[2..3]	NewDevice	Unsigned 16-bit value. New device number.
MD[4..5]	NewSystem	Unsigned 16-bit value. New system number.

Set Serial Number

Used to set the serial number of the specified device.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0203	Set Serial Number.
MD[1..16]	Serial Number	The devices 16-byte serial number. This serial number is reported via the Device Info message.

File Transfer

This command initiates the transfer of data for a device or master. It is intended that this transfer mechanism be common to all types of file transfers including firmware upgrades, IR data, touch panel design files.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0204	File Transfer
MD[1..2]	FileType	Unsigned 16-bit value: 0 = Unused 1 = IR Data 2 = Firmware 3 = Touch Panel File 4 = Axcess2 Tokens
MD[3..4]	Function	The function to execute, such as receive, send, etc. Values 0-255 are predefined. All other values are based upon the FileType.
MD[5..n]	Data	If any, contains Function specific data.

Request IP address list

Requests for the device to respond with the list of IP addresses the device or master attempts to contact.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0205	Request IP Address List

IP Address List

The response to the request above, one IP Address List message will be generated for each IP address in the list.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0206	IP Address List
MD[1..2]	Total Count	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the total number of addresses.
MD[3..4]	ThisIndex	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the item number beginning with 1. This will be incremented for each address until it

		equals Total Count.
MD[5]	Flag	Bit field: Bit - 0: Connection Mode. 0 = UDP connection 1 = TCP connection Bit - 1: Unused Bit - 2: Unused Bit - 3: Unused Bit - 4: Unused Bit - 5: Source of Entry 0 = IDE generated 1 = NetLinx Language generated Bits - 6 & 7: Encoded connection state 00 = (0x00) Looking up URL 01 = (0x40) Attempting connection 10 = (0x80) Waiting for connection valid 11 = (0xC0) Connected
MD[6..7]	Port Number	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the port number to connect.
MD[8..n]	URL	Null terminated address string. Either a URL, or IP address in the form of "192.168.26.148"
MD[n+1..p]	IP Address	Null terminated IP address string. If the URL has been lookup up, contains the IP address of the URL.

Add IP Address

Add a URL or IP address to the device's IP address list.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0207	Add IP Address
MD[1]	Flag	Bit field: Bit - 0: Connection Mode. 0 = UDP connection 1 = TCP connection Bit - 1: Unused Bit - 2: Unused Bit - 3: Unused Bit - 4: Unused Bit - 5: Source of Entry 0 = IDE generated 1 = NetLinx Language generated Bit - 6: Unused Bit - 7: Unused
MD[2..3]	Port Number	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the port number to connect (normally 1319).
MD[4..n]	URL	Null terminated address string. Either a URL, or IP address in the form of "192.168.26.148"

Delete IP Address

Delete one or all URLs or IP addresses from the device's IP address list.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0208	Delete IP Address
MD[1]	DeleteFlag	Bit field: Bit 0 - If set, delete all URLs. Bit 1 - Unused. Bit 2 - Unused.

		Bit 3 - Unused. Bit 4 - Unused. Bit 5 - Unused. Bit 6 - Unused. Bit 7 - Unused.
MD[2]	Flag	Bit field: Bit - 0: Connection Mode. 0 = UDP connection 1 = TCP connection Bit - 1: Unused Bit - 2: Unused Bit - 3: Unused Bit - 4: Unused Bit - 5: Source of Entry 0 = IDE generated 1 = NetLinx Language generated Bit - 6: Unused Bit - 7: Unused
MD[3..4]	Port Number	Unsigned 16-bit value containing the port number to connect (normally 1319).
MD[5..n]	URL	Null terminated address string. Either a URL, or IP address in the form of "192.168.26.148"

Set DNS IP Addresses

Set the IP address(es) of the DNS servers and the domain name. A maximum of three (3) IP addresses may be specified. The search order is same as the order provided. A NULL must be provided for empty entries.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0209	Set DNS IP Address
MD[1..n]	Domain Name	Null terminated name string. This name gets appended to names without a dot. Example, "panja.com"
MD[n+1..p]	DNS IP Address1	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.25.5")
MD[p+1..q]	DNS IP Address2	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "12.5.138.7")
MD[q+1..r]	DNS IP Address3	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form.

Request DNS IP Addresses

Request the IP address(es) of the DNS servers and the domain name of a device.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020A	Requests the device's DNS IP Address list

Get DNS IP Addresses

Get the IP address(es) of the DNS servers and the domain name.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020B	Get DNS IP Address
MD[1..n]	Domain Name	Null terminated name string. This name

		gets appended to names without a dot. Example, "panja.com"
MD[n+1..p]	DNS IP Address1	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.25.5")
MD[p+1..q]	DNS IP Address2	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "12.5.138.7")
MD[q+1..r]	DNS IP Address3	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form.

Set Ethernet IP Address

Set the IP address, subnet mask, and gateway of the unit's Ethernet interface. A NULL must be provided for empty entries.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020C	Set Ethernet IP Address
MD[1]	Flags	Bit field: Bit 0 - If set, use DHCP for IP address and subnet mask. The IP address and subnet mask fields must be supplied, but are ignored. Bit 1 - Unused. Bit 2 - Unused. Bit 3 - Unused. Bit 4 - Unused. Bit 5 - Unused. Bit 6 - Unused. Bit 7 - Unused.
MD[2..n]	Host Name	Null terminated host name string. (e.g. "NetLinx1")
MD[n+1..p]	IP Address	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.26.26")
MD[p+1..q]	Subnet Mask	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "255.255.255.0")
MD[q+1..r]	Gateway	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.26.2").

Request Ethernet IP Address

Request the device's Ethernet interface IP address, subnet mask, and gateway of the unit's Ethernet interface. The response to this message is the Get Ethernet IP Address message.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020D	Request Ethernet IP Address

Get Ethernet IP Address

Get the IP address, subnet mask, and gateway of the unit's Ethernet interface.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020E	Get Ethernet IP Address
MD[1]	Flags	Bit field:

		Bit 0 - If set, use DHCP for IP address and subnet mask. The IP address and subnet mask fields must be supplied, but are ignored. Bit 1 - Unused. Bit 2 - Unused. Bit 3 - Unused. Bit 4 - Unused. Bit 5 - Unused. Bit 6 - Unused. Bit 7 - Unused.
MD[2..n]	Host Name	Null terminated host name string. (e.g. "NetLinx1")
MD[n+1..p]	IP Address	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.25.5")
MD[p+1..q]	Subnet Mask	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "255.255.255.0")
MD[q+1..r]	Gateway	Null terminated address string. Must be the IP address in dot notation form (e.g. "192.168.26.2").

Set Time and Date

Sets the Time and Date of the unit.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x020F	Set Time & Date
MD[1..2]	Month	Month (1-12)
MD[3..4]	Day of Month	Day of Month (1-31)
MD[5..6]	Year	Year (1999-2099)
MD[7..8]	Hours	Hour (0-23)
MD[9..10]	Minutes	Minute (0-59)
MD[11..12]	Seconds	Seconds (0-59)
MD[13..14]	Day of Week	Day of week (0-6) 0=Sunday

Request Current Time and Date

Request the device's current time and date. The response to this message is the Get Time and Date message.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0210	Request Current Time and Date

Get Time and Date

Gets the devices time and date.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0211	Get Time & Date
MD[1..2]	Month	Month (1-12)
MD[3..4]	Day of Month	Day of Month (1-31)
MD[5..6]	Year	Year (1999-2099)
MD[7..8]	Hours	Hour (0-23)
MD[9..10]	Minutes	Minute (0-59)
MD[11..12]	Seconds	Seconds (0-59)
MD[13..14]	Day of Week	Day of week (0-6) 0=Sunday

Restart

Restart the device or a subset of the device.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0212	Restart
MD[1..2]	Flag	This field has the following enumerated meanings: 0 - Device reboot. The device should perform the "coldest" boot possible. 1 - NetLinx restart. Shutdown and restart the NetLinx interpreter. 65535 - Smart reboot. The device should perform the necessary steps to activate any previous configuration parameters. Including, but not limited to, "cold" rebooting the device. For example, if the IP address configuration has changed, and a reboot is required to begin using the new IP, then the device should reboot.

Completion Code

Indicates successful/unsuccessful completion of a previous message. In the case where the device settings, such as device number, are being modified, the completion code message is generate using the "old" device information before the new settings take effect.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0213	Completion Code

MD[1..2]	wMessage	The message code (not Message ID) of the message (command) that is completed. For example, when a Set Ethernet IP Address message has been processed by a device, the device responds with a Completion Code message with wMessage set to 0x020C.
MD[3]	bStatus	Bit field indicating success or failure of the specified message: Bit 0 : 0=Failed, 1=success Bits 1-7 must be zero.

Set Identify Mode/Address Response

Indicates that the device has received the Identify Mode/Address Enable and has had a button pressed on the device to indicate it should take on the ID Mode device and system number.

Field	Value(s)	Description
MC	0x0282	Set Identify mode/address response
MD[1..2]	Old Device	Unsigned 16-bit value. Old device number.
MD[3..4]	Old System	Unsigned 16-bit value. Old system number.

IP Port Connection Manager

The following messages originate from or are destined for the IP Port Connection Manager:

Command	Value	Description
ReqIPConnection (Device->Master)	0x0381	Requests an IP connection.
Request IP Connection Status (Device->Master)	0x0382	Requests the status of an active or pending connection.
IP Connection Status (Master->Device)	0x0303	Indicates the current status of a connection or connection request. Indicates: success, failure, unexpected closing, Host terminated connection, etc.
Authenticate Connection (From Master)	0x0304	This message is the challenge that is sent to the client device.
Authentication Response (To Master)	0x0385	Encrypted challenge response from the client.
Connection Granted/Failed (From Master)	0x0306	Status back to the client regarding the connection.

The included message protocol and its packet are designed to be sent independent of any transport protocol. Thus, this message can be sent by a TCP/IP protocol over any connection or by a lontalk protocol, which is based on the phastlink protocol developed by Panja, Inc. This protocol can also be carried over on RS232/PPP

connections. This protocol supports master to master, PC to master and PC to device communication.

Communication components are usually represented using the seven-layer ISO model. Operating Systems such as Windows NT/9x provide most of these layers with a powerful object oriented abstraction at the application layer. Under Windows, at the application layer, the software developer is presented with a Berkley Sockets interface. With this interface, the developer can establish two-way communication using an object known as a "Socket". Applications can choose to be clients or servers. Though this is a powerful abstraction, there is no facility to help the application developer formulate a protocol in terms of the packets of information sent back and forth on the wire. The services that are available deal with namespace resolution and sending and receiving of blocks of binary data. Typically, the client and server portions of the application are written to understand each other's messages on the wire. The messages consist of structures of binary information. To formulate such messages, the developer usually has to program in a low-level language such as C or C++.

The Internet has given rise to a whole new species of developers called "Web developers". On an average, they are not low-level programmers who can code in C or C++ and instead use some combination of HTML, Java, JavaScript and VBScript. Except for the full Java language, the other languages are "scripting languages". They do not provide the developer with services and facilities of a full programming language.

The primary goal of the Panja dynamic messaging components invention is to make a scripting language such as VBScript or JavaScript (or even Visual Basic) capable of directly communicating on any TCP/IP network connection. This means that these dynamic messaging

components have to give the script writer the ability to: (i) form binary messages and transmit them on a network connection; and (ii) receive binary messages from a network connection, understand their format and "unpack" them to extract individual fields in the message. As explained later in this document, it will be seen that apart from these two basic requirements, current communication protocols require more complex features that these components now provide.

To meet the primary goal explained above, the dynamic messaging components were chosen to be implemented using the Microsoft Component Object Model or COM. This is primarily because presently no other programming model allows a scripting language to use self-describing objects with such ease of use. COM objects are well-understood by the developer community and the model is mature and stable. However, other suitable programming models may be used if desired.

To effect the requirements enumerated above, three distinct objects or components are provided. They include a binary message descriptor/layout manager object, a message instance object that represents one network message, and a transport object that manages the buffered network transmission issues.

The message descriptor/layout manager object allows a script to define the structure of binary messages that represent packets of information sent back and forth on a network connection. The message structures are identified using unique names. Once defined, these structures can later be used to form instances of messages or define more complex structures, which contain embedded structures in them. Referring to FIGURE 11 for an example of the message descriptor/layout manager object, which includes a binary message structure 700 that may be sent or received according to the

communication protocol. The packet structure includes a message header structure that is an embedded structure within the message. The message header includes a packet protocol identifier (2 bytes) 702, a packet size in bytes (4 bytes) 703, a packet version (2 bytes) 704, and a packet type (2 bytes) 705. Message structure 700 further includes a message body, which contains data according to the message type. For example, the message body may include an element 1 (2 bytes) 705, an element 2 (a variable length element whose size is specified by element 1) 707, and an element 3 which is a NULL terminated string.

To further describe this message structure, two additional message structures are defined: the message header and the entire message. The entire message contains the header structure as an embedded structure within itself. The following pseudo-code shows the general format of the description:

```
LayoutManager = CreateObject("LayoutManager")

LayoutManager.BeginDefineLayout("PacketHeader")
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitive("SHORT", "Protocol")
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitive("LONG", "PacketSize")
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitive("SHORT", "PacketVersion")
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitive("SHORT", "PacketType")
LayoutManager.EndDefineLayout()

LayoutManager.BeginDefineLayout("HelloWorldPacket")
        // message header
        LayoutManager.AddStruct("PacketHeader", "Header")

        // message body
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitive ("SHORT", "Element1")
        LayoutManager.AddPrimitiveDynamicArray("CHAR", "Element2", "Element1")
        LayoutManager.AddSZString( "Element3")
LayoutManager.EndDefineLayout()
```

The operations (methods) that the layout manager provides allow a script to define the individual

components of a binary message. The operations generally take the form:

<Object>.<Operation Name> (<Element Type>, <Element Name>, <Other Arguments ...>)

For example, to add the "PacketSize" element to the message, the "AddPrimitive" operation is used. The element type is specified as "LONG" meaning it is an integer 4 bytes in size. Adding elements to a message has to be done within a "BeginDefineLayout-EndDefineLayout" pair of operations. This indicates to the layout manager when a new message structure definition begins and ends. Once a message structure is defined completely, it may be used as an element type in further message definitions. In the example above, the "AddStruct" operation was used to make "Packet Header Structure" an element in the structure definition of message "Packet Type 1". Embedding structures within structures allows for definition of very complex messages.

The example also illustrated yet another important concept. This is the ability to define variable length elements within a message structure. The element named "element 2" is of variable length. It is a byte (char) array whose length is specified within the message by the preceding element named "element 1". Dynamically sized elements of this type are pretty common in many communication protocols.

Due to their very nature, some dynamically sized elements do not have to have an explicit element specify their size. An example of such an element type is a NULL terminated string. A NULL terminated string is a sequence of bytes in which the byte value of 0 is a special value indicating the end of the sequence. Since the end of the sequence is specified by this special

value, its length does not have to be explicitly stored. The example shows that "element 3" is a NULL terminated string and the operation "AddSZString" is used to add it.

The following examples enumerate the operations (methods) provided by the layout manager.

Message Descriptor/Layout Manager Object Methods

- *BeginDefineLayout* - starts definition of a new message (cannot be called while already defining a message).
- *EndDefineLayout* - ends definition of a current message (cannot be called if not currently defining a message).
- *IsDefinedLayout* - checks for existence of a message definition and returns TRUE/FALSE.
- *AddPrimitive* - adds a primitive element to a message structure. Primitive elements form the basic entities of a binary message. Primitive elements includes characters (1 byte), 2 byte integers, 4 byte integers, floating point numbers (4 bytes) and double precision floating point numbers (8 bytes).
- *AddPrimitiveArray* - adds an array of primitive elements to a message structure.
- *AddPrimitiveDynamicArray* - adds a dynamic array of primitive elements to a message structure. The array does not have to be fixed in size, rather, the name of another (integer type) element is used to contain the actual length of this element inside a specific instance of this message structure. The size element has to have been already defined within the message structure. In other words, the length of this dynamic element is specified by an element within the message and that element should be stored in a position physically above the dynamic element.
- *AddStruct* - adds a structure element to a message structure. The structure element must already have been defined.

- *AddStructArray* - adds an array of structure elements to a message structure.
- *AddStructDynamicArray* - adds a dynamic array of structure elements to a message structure. The same rules as that of AddPrimitiveDynamicArray applies to this method.
- *AddSZString* - adds a NULL terminated string element to a message structure.
- *AddSZStringArray* - adds an array of NULL terminated string elements to a message structure. The array does not have to be fixed in length, rather, the last string element of the array has to be terminated with two NULL characters rather than one NULL character.
- *AddPadding* - adds padding of specified byte amount to a message structure after an element. This method is used to align individual elements of a structure to be on specific byte boundaries.
- *AddAlignmentPadding* - adds padding to a message structure after an element to align to the specified alignment boundary. Byte alignments can be made to occur on 2, 4, 8 or 16 byte boundaries. This method is used to align individual elements on specific byte boundaries when the element sizes are not fixed.

The message instance object of the dynamic messaging component allows a script to create an instance of a previously defined message in memory, fill the message with values for the individual fields of the message, and then with the help of transport object (which is described in the next section), transmit the message over a network connection. The message instance object also allows a script to receive an instance of a message over a network connection, unpack the message and access the values of the individual elements in the message.

The message structure previously defined will be used again to show how an instance of that message could

be created in memory. FIGURE 12 illustrates an instance of the message whose structure was described in the previous section. Message 720 includes a message header that has the following exemplary values: packet protocol identifier = 1 (722); packet size in bytes = 23 (723); packet version = 1 (724); and packet type = 3 (725). The message body may contains the following elements: element 1 = 5 (size of following dynamic array in bytes) (726); element 2 = [hello] (array of 5 characters) (727); and element 3 = "world\0" (NULL \0 terminated string) (728).

The following pseudo-code shows a typical sequence in creating the message instance:

```
MessageInstance = CreateObject("LayoutInstance")
// (1) create message of type "HelloWorldPacket" - previously defined using
Layout Manager
MessageInstance.CreateMessage("HelloWorldPacket", FALSE)

// (2) setup length of dynamic fields
MessageInstance.SetDynamicArraySize("Element2", StringLength("Hello"))
MessageInstance.SetSZStringLength("Element3", 0, StringLength ("World"))

// (3) set values for elements
MessageInstance.BeginSetLayout()
      // setup message header fields
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.Protocol", 1)
      MessageInstance.SetInt4("PacketHeader.PacketSize",
MessageInstance.GetMessageSize())
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.PacketVersion", 1)
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.PacketType", 3)

      // setup message body fields
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("Element1", StringLength("Hello"))

      // set dynamic array element (Element2)
      MessageInstance.SetCharArray("Element2",        StringLength("Hello"),
"Hello")

      // set NULL terminated element (Element3)
      MessageInstance.SetSZString("Element3", "World")
MessageInstance.EndSetLayout()
```

In the pseudo-code above, a message instance object is created which is then used to set the various values for the elements within the message. The code to actually transmit the message is described below.

The first operation performed is the "CreateMessage" operation. This operation allows a script to create a message of a given type. The message type is previously defined within this (or some other) script using the message descriptor/layout manager object. The meaning of the second boolean argument (FALSE in this case) is explained below. Following the creation of the message, two operations are performed to set the lengths of the two dynamic fields within the message. The two fields are "element 2" and "element 3". "element 2" is a dynamic array of characters and "element 3" is a NULL terminated string. After a message is created, sizes of all dynamic elements within the message have to be specified because that is how the Message Instance object knows how much memory this message will occupy. If there are no dynamic elements in the message, this step can be completely avoided.

The third step is actually setting the values of the various fields (elements) in the message. In this message, there are two parts: header and body. The various operations supported by the Message Instance object provide scripts extreme flexibility in writing values of elements into a message. In this instance, methods like "SetInt2", "SetInt4", "SetCharArray" and "SetSZString" are used. Also, once all dynamic elements have been explicitly sized, the Message Instance object knows what the entire size of the message is, so the "GetMessageSize" operation can be used to get the size. This operation is used in writing the message size into the "PacketSize" element of the header. The sequence of Set operations has to be enclosed within a pair of

"BeginSetLayout-EndSetLayout" operations so that the Message Instance knows when a message is ready to be transmitted.

Now that a complete example of a message instance has been illustrated, the following section enumerates all the operations (methods) provided by the Message Instance.

The message/layout instance object includes the following methods:

- *CreateMessage* - creates an instance of a message, given its type. Optionally, this method can be used to transform a message of one type to another type.
- *SetDynamicArraySize* - sets the size of a dynamic element inside a message.
- *SetSZStringLength* - sets the length of a NULL terminated string. The string may be by itself an element in the message or could be part of a string array.
- *SetSZStringArraySize* - sets the size of an array of strings in a message.
- *BeginSetLayout* - notifies the message instance object that "Set" methods are about to be called which will write values to individual elements within the message.
- *SetChar* - sets the value of a single byte (char) element.
- *SetInt2* - sets the value of a 2-byte integer (short) element.
- *SetInt4* - sets the value of a 4-byte integer (long) element.
- *SetFloat* - sets the value of a floating point (4 byte) element.
- *SetDouble* - sets the value of a double precision floating point (8 byte) element.

- *SetCharArray* - copies an array of characters into an element.
- *SetSZString* - copies a string into the NULL terminated string element.
- *EndSetLayout* - notifies the Message Instance object that the message should now readied for transmission as all the individual element values have been set.
- *BeginGetLayout* - notifies the Message Instance object that the message should be un-packaged so that individual elements can be "read" out of it.
- *GetChar* - returns the value of a single byte (char) element.
- *GetInt2* - returns the value of a 2-byte integer (short) element.
- *GetInt4* - returns the value of a 4-byte integer (long) element.
- *GetFloat* - returns the value of a floating point element.
- *GetDouble* - returns the value of a double precision element.
- *GetCharArray* - returns an array of chars from an char array element.
- *GetSZStringLength* - returns the size of a NULL terminated string element in the message.
- *GetSZStringArraySize* - returns the size of a string array in the message.
- *GetSZString* - returns a string from the message.
- *EndGetLayout* - notifies the Message Instance object that the script is done "reading" values out of the message.
- *ClearData* - clears any message instance data within the object.
- *GetMessageSize* - returns the size (in bytes) of the entire message instance.

- *Send* - using an instance of the transport object, streams the message instance over a network connection.
- *Receive* - using an instance of the transport object, receives a message instance from a network connection.
- *SetConvert* - sets network to host and host to network byte swapping transformation mode. In this mode, all incoming messages are assumed to be in network format and all outgoing messages are converted to network format.
- *Pushback* - allows for message overflow/underflow. When an incoming message is partially formed or contains more than a full message, the partial message bytes can be "pushed" back into the transport object which can be retrieved later.

Message layout and message instance creation are set forth above. The final step in network connectivity is the actual transport. Message layout and message instancing are actions that give rise to blocks of bytes in the memory of the web server (or wherever the script is being executed). To be able to communicate on a network, a live connection has to be made to be able to send and receive data. The third object inside the Panja dynamic messaging components module is a transport object implemented specifically to handle TCP/IP networks. The two previous objects do not in anyway assume what kind of a network connection they are communicating over. The transport object's interface is specified independent of the nature of the network. The transport object has a built-in asynchronous message handler that can fire scripts when messages arrive outside of a script's "Receive" method call.

Examples of the transport object methods includes:

- *Connect* - connects to a given remote computer given its network address and end-point (port).
- *Close* - closes an existing connection.

- *GetLastSocketError* - returns the last error that occurred on the network connection.
- *SetScriptPath* - Sets the path of the script that will be executed on incoming asynchronous messages.
- *DisableAsyncHandler* - during some operations, it is desirable not to have the asynchronous message processor fire external scripts - this method allows a script to disable the asynchronous message processor, during which time all incoming messages are buffered up.
- *EnableAsyncHandler* - enables the asynchronous message processor - from this point onward, every incoming asynchronous message will result in an external script being executed.
- *IsConnected* - returns whether the transport object is connected to a remote computer or not.
- *GetHost* - returns the network address of the remote computer to which the transport object is currently connected.
- *GetPort* - returns the port on the remote computer to which the transport object is currently connected.

The sequence of operations to create and send a message instance is given in the exemplary pseudo-code below:

```
// Create a transport object and connect it to a remote computer
Transport = CreateObject("Transport")
Transport.Connect("abc.com", 10000)

MessageInstance = CreateObject("LayoutInstance")

// create message of type "HelloWorldPacket" - previously defined using
Layout Manager
MessageInstance.CreateMessage("HelloWorldPacket", FALSE)

// setup length of dynamic fields
MessageInstance.SetDynamicArraySize("Element2", StringLength("Hello"))
MessageInstance.SetSZStringLength("Element3", 0, StringLength ("World"))
```

```
// set values for elements
MessageInstance.BeginSetLayout()
      // setup message header fields
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.Protocol", 1)
      MessageInstance.SetInt4("PacketHeader.PacketSize",
MessageInstance.GetMessageSize())
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.PacketVersion", 1)
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("PacketHeader.PacketType",  3)

      // setup message body fields
      MessageInstance.SetInt2("Element1", StringLength("Hello"))

      // set dynamic array element (Element2)
      MessageInstance.SetCharArray("Element2",       StringLength("Hello"),
"Hello")

      // set NULL terminated element (Element3)
      MessageInstance.SetSZString("Element3", "World")
MessageInstance.EndSetLayout()

// transmit message instance using the transport object "Transport"
MessageInstance.Send(Transport)
```

The dynamic messaging components are used in the communication between the ASP-based web server and the Internet appliance server. The various web pages that deal with controlling and administering the Internet appliance server use these objects to create and send TCP/IP messages to the IA server.

Although several embodiments of the present invention and their advantages have been described in detail, it should be understood that mutations, changes, substitutions, transformations, modifications, variations, and alterations can be made therein without departing from the teachings of the present invention, the spirit and scope of the invention being set forth by the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A control system, comprising:

at least one device;

a network interconnecting the at least one device;

a control network portal coupled between the network and the Internet; and

a master controller coupled to the network and operable to control the operations of the Internet and the at least one device, the Internet is controllable as a device coupled to the network.

2. The control system, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising at least one user interface coupled to the network and in communication with the master controller.

3. The control system, as set forth in claim 2, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a display; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

4. The control system, as set forth in claim 2, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a control system status indicator; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

5. The control system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the control network portal comprises a web server coupled to the Internet and operable to receive requests from the Internet and to service the received requests.



6. The control system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the control network portal comprises an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet and operable to pass command messages therebetween.

7. The control system, as set forth in claim 6, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

8. The control system, as set forth in claim 6, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of a device in the network.



9. A control system, comprising:

at least one device interconnected by a network;

at least one master controller operable to control the operations of the at least one device;

at least one user interface operable to accept user input; and

the Internet in communication with the master controller and operable to receive commands from the master controller.

10. The control system, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a display; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

11. The control system, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a control system status indicator; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

12. The control system, as set forth in claim 9, further comprising a control network portal coupled between the network and the Internet and operable to enable the Internet to be controlled as a device in the network under the control of the master controller.

13. The control system, as set forth in claim 12, wherein the control network portal comprises a web server coupled to the Internet and operable to receive requests from the Internet and to service in response to the received requests.



14. The control system, as set forth in claim 12, wherein the control network portal comprises an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet and operable to pass command messages therebetween.

15. The control system, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

16. The control system, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of a device in the network.



14. The control system, as set forth in claim 12, wherein the control network portal comprises an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet and operable to pass command messages therebetween.

15. The control system, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

16. The control system, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of a device in the network.



17. An Internet control system, comprising:

at least one device interconnected by a network;

at least one master controller operable to control the operations of the at least one device;

at least one user interface operable to accept user input;

a control network portal coupled to the network; and

the Internet in communication with the master controller and operable to issue commands to and receive commands from the master controller.

18. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the at least one user interface is a touch panel.

19. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the at least one user interface comprises:

a display; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

20. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 18, wherein the at least one user interface comprises:

a control system status indicator; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

21. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 18, wherein the control network portal comprises a web server coupled to the Internet and operable to receive requests from the Internet and to service in response to the received requests.



22. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the control network portal comprises an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet and operable to pass command messages therebetween.

23. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 22, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

24. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 22, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of an appliance in the network.

25. A control system encompassing the Internet, comprising:

a control area network interconnecting at least one device;

at least one master controller coupled to the control area network operable to control the operations of the at least one device; and

the Internet in communication with the master controller and operable to issue commands to and receive commands from the master controller.

26. The control systems, as set forth in claim 25, further comprising at least one user interface coupled to the network and in communication with the master controller.

27. The control system, as set forth in claim 26, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a display; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

28. The control system, as set forth in claim 26, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a control system status indicator; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

29. The control system, as set forth in claim 25, further comprising a control network portal coupling the Internet and the control area network.



30. The control system, as set forth in claim 29, wherein the control network portal comprises a web server coupled to the Internet and operable to receive requests from the Internet and to service in response to the received requests.

31. The control system, as set forth in claim 29, wherein the control network portal comprises an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet and operable to pass command messages therebetween.

32. The control system, as set forth in claim 31, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

33. The control system, as set forth in claim 31, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of an appliance in the network.

34. An Internet control system, comprising:

at least one device interconnected by a network;

at least one master controller operable to control the operations of the at least one device;

at least one user interface operable to accept user input;

a control network portal coupled to the network; and

the Internet in communication with the master controller and operable to issue commands to the master controller to control the at least one device, and further operable to receive commands from the master controller and be controlled thereby.

35. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a display; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.

36. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one user interface each comprises:

a control system status indicator; and

a user input device operable to receive a user input.



37. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 34, further comprising a control network portal including:

a web server coupled to the Internet and operable to receive requests from the Internet and to service in response to the received requests; and

an Internet appliance server coupled to the Internet via the web server and the network and further operable to pass command messages therebetween.

38. The Internet control system, as set forth in claim 37, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises a software device emulator operable to spawn a software logical device for the Internet, thereby commands from the master controller destined for the Internet are delivered to the software logical device.

39. The control system, as set forth in claim 37, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises:

at least one software logical device representative of the Internet; and

at least one software logical device representative of an appliance in the network.

40. The control system, as set forth in claim 37, wherein the Internet appliance server comprises at least one protocol converter operable to convert between a first protocol used by the Internet appliance server and a second protocol used in the network.

41. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a lighting system.



42. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a heating, ventilating and air conditioning system.

43. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises an audio-visual system.

44. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a security system.

45. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a surveillance system.

46. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a fire protection system.

47. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a household appliance.

48. The control system, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the at least one device comprises a household equipment.



49. A method of incorporating the Internet into a control system, comprising:

coupling the Internet to a control area network interconnecting at least one device and a master controller;

receiving control commands from the Internet;

processing the control commands to extract the command data including a recipient ID;

sending the command data to the master controller, the master controller sending the command data to at least one device according to the recipient ID; and

the recipient acting according to the command data.

50. The method, as set forth in claim 49, wherein processing the control commands comprises:

sending the extracted command data to a software logical device;

storing the extracted command data at a known location in a data structure; and

notifying the master controller.

51. The method, as set forth in claim 50, wherein notifying the master controller comprises:

changing the state of an input channel associated with the software logical device;

the master controller detecting the change in state of the input channel;

the master controller requesting the stored command data from the software logical device; and

the master controller sending the command data to the recipient.

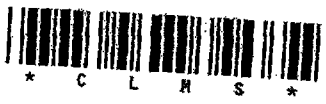


52. The method, as set forth in claim 51, further comprising again changing the state of the input channel associated with the software logical device after sending the command data to the recipient.

53. The method, as set forth in claim 49, further comprising the master controller sending the command data to a user interface for updating a display thereof.

54. The method, as set forth in claim 49, further comprising converting the command message from a first protocol to a second protocol used in the control area network.

55. The method, as set forth in claim 49, further comprising acknowledging to the Internet the receipt of the command.



56. A method of incorporating the Internet into a control system, comprising:

coupling the Internet to a control area network interconnecting at least one device and a master controller;

receiving a command from a user, the command including a recipient ID;

forming a control command message in response to receiving the command; and

sending the control command message to the Internet according to the recipient ID.

57. The method, as set forth in claim 56, wherein sending the control command message comprises:

sending the control command message to a software logical device representative of a recipient according to the recipient ID; and

storing the control command message at a known location in a data structure.

58. The method, as set forth in claim 57, further comprising:

changing the state of an output channel associated with the software logical device;

the Internet detecting the change in state of the output channel;

the Internet requesting the stored control command message from the software logical device; and

the software logical device sending the control command message to the Internet.

59. The method, as set forth in claim 57, further comprising again changing the state of the output channel associated with the software logical device after sending the control command message to the Internet.



60. The method, as set forth in claim 57, further comprising converting the control command message from a first protocol used in the control area network to a second protocol.



61. An Internet control method, comprising:

entering a command at a user interface device in communication with a control area network;

forming a message including the command, a sender ID and a recipient ID;

delivering the message to a master controller in communication with the control area network;

the master controller delivering the message to a software logical device specified by the recipient ID;

if necessary, converting the message from a first protocol to a second protocol;

the software logical device storing the converted message at an indexable position in a data structure;

an Internet application associated with the software logical device being notified of the message;

the Internet application requesting the software logical device to send the converted message;

the Internet application receives the message and acts according to the command within the converted message; and

notifying the user interface that the command has been carried out.