

OPC UA ACCELERATES PRODUCT SERVICE AUTOMATION

About NextNine

NextNine’s mission is to improve the performance of its customers’ service organizations via automated, proactive, remote product service. NextNine Service Automation, the company’s patented, award-winning software platform allows technology vendors to proactively monitor and service their products at the customer site and automate the discovery, diagnosis and resolution of technical issues before they cause disruptions or downtime.

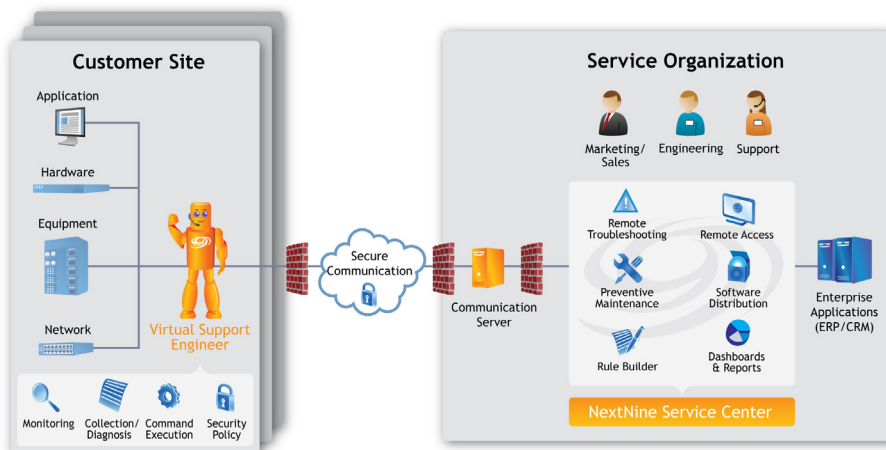
NextNine’s customer base consists of industry leaders in several verticals including telecommunications, manufacturing and medical devices. It is the leading provider of remote service solutions for industrial automation vendors, serving 5 out of the top 7 vendors in this space.

Virtual Support Engineer™ (VSE)

The VSE is a Java based software that is extremely flexible and can be “programmed” to monitor various components of the supported product, including applications, operating systems, databases and network components. The VSE communicates with the supported product using built in support for protocols such as Telnet, FTP, DBI, SNMP and WMI.

To better address the requirements of the support organization in the field of Process Control and Industrial Automation, NextNine added OPC UA to its suite of network protocols, thereby streamlining OPC communication with the supported system. In so doing, data retrieved by the VSE from OPC servers is seamlessly integrated into the support organization’s knowledge infrastructure, where it is effectively leveraged to prevent and resolve technical issues.

The following diagram depicts a simplified architecture of the NextNine product.



OPC is a standard for the communication of real-time plant data between control devices from different manufacturers. Some of the benefits of OPC UA within the VSE are:

- Data-Read and Subscription based access to data originating from various plant floor devices.
- OPC UA, the most recent OPC specification, looks to become the standard for exchanging industrial data.
- Multiple platform support through the Java Communication Stack.
- Security implementation based on new standards of authentication, authorization, encryption and data integrity.
- Wide availability of Wrappers that allow the VSE client to capitalize on the existing install base of classic OPC Servers.

Prosys OPC UA Java SDK

We at NextNine chose Prosys as our vendor of choice for implementing OPC UA support. Before becoming a Prosys customer and throughout our testing and development Prosys has given us support services that command much praise. Enquiries were answered promptly, sometimes within minutes. Having completed the evaluation of Prosys OPC UA Java SDK it was clear that the Prosys product would be the most natural choice for implementing an OPC UA client within the VSE.

The most important reasons that made Prosys an easy choice as the SDK for us are:

- An easy to use Java API that abstracts the complexities of the OPC Foundation's UA Java Stack.
- Prosys has a long track record in the OPC development community and has been dominant working around the Java stack within the OPC Foundation.
- The Prosys Product support team was outstanding in their response time when dealing with various concerns and enquiries that we sent to them.

It is clear to us that the ease of use of the SDK allowed us to expedite OPC support within our product thus saving us both time and money. We did not need to deal with the intricacies of this complex protocol and instead we concentrated solely on our business. Connections, session management, subscription services and the security infrastructure are all seamlessly handled through a simplified API and with minimum effort.

“ Our experience with Prosys has been very positive and we would strongly recommend their SDK package to anyone looking to save time and money when implementing OPC UA within their Java application.”

Michael Rooz, NextNine Inc.

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