

What Does "M2M" Technology Mean for Your Company?



M2M Communications: A New Master Plan for Remote Asset Automation

The meaning of "M2M" is evolving, driven by more device-centric communications to better serve the needs of people and organizations. "M2M" can translate to machine-to-machine, machine-to-man or mobile-to-machine. They all describe a beneficial interface with important remote assets without physical human contact.

The demarcation by M2M technology from traditional telemetry and SCADA is in the use of more "intelligence" in field devices, open technologies, more efficient communications and the Internet.

What is M2M?

Expanded applications, communications, and services for remote device networking

M2M Features

The value of M2M begins with making more data available from remote equipment. Raw data is then integrated with other machines, transported to new and existing systems, and made easily accessible by people. Advanced M2M service platforms transform raw data into actionable knowledge.

M2M Benefits

M2M technology enables owners of remote assets to monitor, manage, and operate equipment more reliably and efficiently without traveling to or maintaining staff on site. M2M means reducing operating and capital costs, improving customer service and satisfaction, and increasing revenue.

Key M2M Technology Concepts

Intelligence in the field is becoming more pervasive, both in new embedded smart devices and gateways that add M2M communications intelligence to existing sensors and RTUs. Intelligence enables aggregation of data from disparate sources and enhances communication over the network. Low cost communications options and IP networks bring data from the remote site and put it into users hands anywhere, anytime over the Internet.

M2M technology's relationship to wireless

Communications infrastructure, particularly wireless, has evolved significantly over the past few years. This development has been a significant driver for the growth of M2M device networks. M2M technology is not wireless per se, but often takes advantage of wireless technologies such as satellite and digital/analog cellular telephony to monitor and control devices in remote locations or scattered across a territory.



Where is the Strongest Interest in M2M?

Industries with widely distributed assets with high commercial value are where the most interest in M2M solutions appears today. M2M is expanding the range and availability of raw data and making data more actionable. Actionable data contributes proactively to process improvement leading to lower costs, better performance, and increased profitability.

Is M2M technology new?

The answer is "no," and "yes." Collecting data from machines over communications networks is not new. SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) is the best-known example.

M2M, however, is much more than SCADA. Here's what's new:

- Much more operational data through intelligent field devices and highly efficient communications
- Value added applications and services which allow operators to sort through this explosion of data and take action
- Integrating data with other machines, systems and people through open standards-based interfaces and the Internet

Serving Immediate and Long-Term Needs

M2M benefits take effect quickly and last for years. M2M ROI comes from improved day-to-day operations, and in more strategic long-term planning, business development, and budgeting.

Return-on-investment can be defined in such hard metrics as:

- Reduced maintenance, inspection and repair costs
- Personnel reassignment
- Deferred capital costs
- Reduction of lost revenue
- Increased customer retention
- Improved maintenance planning



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