Donnerstag, 20. Mai 2021 15:41

The OCA Alliance previews AES70-2021

A raft of enhancements and new features improve accessibility and useability

Following the recent announcement of a 'lightweight' AES70 implementation that makes AES70 control solutions available to any that wish to implement it, the OCA Alliance is excited to offer a sneak peek of the latest version of the AES70 device control standard. The AES70-2021 release will be upwards-compatible from the current AES70-2018 and offers several significant enhancements for new and improved features along with a number of documentation upgrades for increased clarity, readability and precision.

The most important new features are as follows:

- Datasets
  - This is a mechanism for devices to exchange data blocks (datasets) with controllers. Data block size is limited only by implementation. AES70-2021 will specifically define several types of datasets. Furthermore, manufacturers will also be able to add their own datasets as required.
- Media files
  - Thanks to the new Datasets feature, controllers can now manage device audio file recording, playback and storage.
- Logging
  -A new logging mechanism – also based in the Datasets feature – enables controllers to retrieve logs generated by a device, in any format and at any time.
- Command sets
  - This is a new mechanism for storing predefined control command sequences in devices and executing them on request, at scheduled times, or at specified positions in media streams.

AES70-21 also includes some significant enhancements to existing functionality:

- Streamlined media connection management
  -This is a major improvement – managing device media streaming connections is now more powerful and easier to program and implement than ever.
- Connection negotiation support
  -There's flexible new support for connection negotiation, the process by which controllers develop compatible transmitting and receiving settings for media stream connections.
- New support for managing presets
  -A new mechanism for storing and recalling device presets has been implemented that is capable of handling complex devices with tens of thousands of parameters. It is easier for controllers and devices to program

and supports much larger sets of stored parameters.

In total, the new 2021 release numbers around 40 new or enhanced features and 15 documentation upgrades, making it easier to implement and manage, and even more powerful. According to Bosch Communications senior scientist and OCA Chair, Jeff Berryman, AES70-2021 will provide some welcome useability improvements, making the route to adoption easier than ever. "As with any standard, the more widely it is adopted and used, the greater the benefit to all concerned and the industry at large. The 2021 release offers several enhancements and upgrades to make it more accessible, easier to implement and also improve performance. Combined with our recent lightweight implementation, we now have AES70 control solutions for every part of the spectrum, from the simplest to the most complex systems."

AES70-2021 is scheduled for release during the second half of 2021 and will be downloadable from the website.

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