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Industry News

SolarEdge and Digi International Collaborate on a Full Connectivity Solution for Photovoltaic Systems

February 18, 2010

Digi International and **SolarEdge** announced their collaboration on full connectivity solutions for photovoltaic (PV) systems, including data harvesting from revenue-grade power meters, PV inverter mesh networking and future interaction with the Smart Grid.

Digi International's range of wireless connectivity solutions is said to enable SolarEdge to improve the retrieval of inverter and panel performance data from PV systems. Among the solutions that are now available, SolarEdge is using Digi's Xbee-PRO to provide what it says is the industry's first solar inverter with embedded ZigBee connectivity. SolarEdge continuously collects data from each solar panel and transmits it without added communication wires from panels to inverters. This solution – providing wireless network and remote connectivity between solar inverters – allows simple access to high-resolution, performance-monitoring data.

"There are many limitations to wire line system configurations, including higher failure rates, added costs and labor, as well as compromised aesthetic



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James Openheim said, "The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance; the wise grows it under his feet."

as compromised aesthetic appearance," said Lior Handelsman, Vice President of Product Strategy at SolarEdge. "Our collaboration with Digi has meant that we can now overcome these challenges and has allowed us to offer a comprehensive, robust and cost-effective solution, which simplifies installation procedures and prepares system owners for future Smart Grid interaction."

According to the companies, a wire line communication between inverters is not ideal in many situations, with particular difficulties connecting multiple inverters in large commercial installations. At residential sites, Ethernet cables and ducts are often required to gap between the inverter and the remote router. By embedding ZigBee connectivity into each inverter, Digi enables SolarEdge to create a self-healing mesh network between all of the site's inverters which eliminates line of sight issues. The inverters can also be easily connected to any local area network (LAN) using any ZigBee equipped gateway with cellular, Wi-Fi or Ethernet connections, such as Digi's ConnectPort X gateways.

This distributed architecture approach is also said to contribute to higher reliability due to the lack of cables and connectors and lower susceptibility to lightning hits, in addition to the reduced costs related to cabling, ducting and labor.

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