Salzburg/Austria, September 13, 2021

Exchange about the future: zenon Innovation Days

From September 7 to 9, the software manufacturer [COPA-DATA](https://www.copadata.com/) invited selected customers, partners and research institutions to its hometown of Salzburg, Austria, for the first-ever zenon Innovation Days. Technicians and practitioners from 32 companies operating in different industries discussed the challenges of digitalization and automation and how to reduce tension in the advancing fusion of OT and IT.

The zenon Innovation Days 2021 took place under the slogan ”Working together with COPA-DATA on the future of industrial automation and digitalization”. Personally invited to Salzburg, a total of 40 participants from eleven countries experienced a mix of knowledge sharing, discussion and imaginary trips to the near future of their industries.

Opening the discussion, Thomas Punzenberger, the CEO and founder of COPA-DATA, said: “The direct exchange with you, our customers and partners, as well as with active researchers is of high importance to us. We seek to understand more about the challenges you face on a daily basis, so please share your thoughts with us so that we can match up to them in our plans. I also ask you to critically question where we can support you more with our zenon Software Platform. We are hungry for your ideas and perfectly able to implement them in the best way possible.”

Diverse experiences for a common vision of the future

This was the first-ever time the zenon Innovation Days took place in this format. Conducted by members of the COPA-DATA Product Management and Development teams, the participants were able to individually plan their two days by choosing from a variety of topics. They were able to explore solutions in: object-based engineering with zenon Smart Objects; scalable, modular deployment scenarios; the technical challenges of OT-IT convergence; topics related to security; and data contextualization and analytics.

The cross-industry approach – bringing together a variety of participants who operate in different industries – produced excitement and opportunities for greater learning. Experts from the fields of mechanical engineering, packaging technology and industrial automation as well as general software engineering and the energy industry traveled to Austria. “At which other event do I, as a mechanical engineer, meet an engineer from the energy supply industry, even from another country, and still find a common topic for mutual exchange?” commented one participant on his event experience. The two days were rounded off by informal evening events in the hospitable city of Salzburg.

The roadmap for zenon in focus

”Digitalization is picking up pace in industrial automation. At the same time, medium-sized companies are now also investing, in some cases massively, in digitalization. Unfortunately, these investments do not always lead to the desired results,” explained Gerald Lochner, Head of Product Management at COPA-DATA. “The zenon Innovation Days provide both our customers and us with a framework to promote an open culture of innovation. They are a source of inspiration and impulse. For this purpose, we explicitly addressed only those people who deal with the technical challenges of their industry on a daily basis. In this way, we quickly got down to the nitty-gritty in the sessions and can now further develop our product in an even more targeted manner.”

With new insights gained from numerous discussion panels and talks at the zenon Innovation Days, the roadmap for the development of the [zenon Software Platform](https://www.copadata.com/en/product/zenon-software-platform-for-industrial-automation-energy-automation/) will now be reviewed and added to. “The event was a complete success. It was good to see that already with zenon 10 many of the existing challenges can be solved. We were also able to ensure that the target direction of the upcoming platform releases is the right one. In the discussions, we gathered a lot of information that will help us with the development of new solutions,” summarized Gerald Lochner. The current version [zenon 10](https://go.copadata.com/zenon10) was released in April 2021.

Captions:

Thomas\_Punzenberger\_COPA-DATA.jpg  
“We are hungry for your ideas and perfectly able to implement them in the best way possible,” invited Thomas Punzenberger, the CEO and founder of COPA-DATA, opening the zenon Innovation Days on September 8, 2021, in Salzburg.

Gerald\_Lochner\_COPA-DATA.jpg  
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*zenon\_Innovation\_Days\_2021\_Group-photo\_300dpi.jpg  
zenon Innovation Days 2021 brought together more than 40 engineering experts talking intensively about the challenges of the ongoing convergence of OT and IT.*

About COPA-DATA

COPA-DATA is an independent software manufacturer that specializes in digitalization for the manufacturing industry and energy sector. Its zenon® Software Platform enables users worldwide to automate, manage, monitor, integrate and optimize machines, equipment, buildings and power grids. COPA-DATA combines decades of experience in automation with the potential of digital transformation. In this way, the company supports its customers to achieve their objectives more easily, faster and more efficiently.  
The family-owned business was founded by Thomas Punzenberger in 1987 in Salzburg, Austria. In 2020, with more than 300 employees worldwide, it generated revenue of EUR 54 million.

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