



Prodigy-ET

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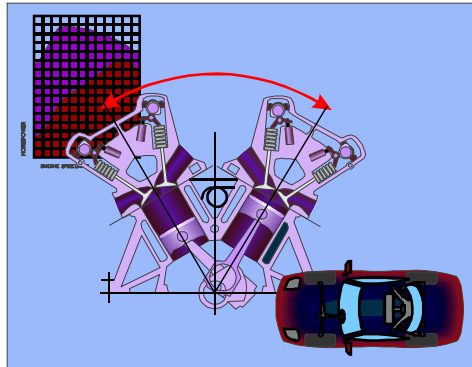
Issue No. 9

Prodigy-ET Set To Take Automotive Industry By Storm

Following a 3 year development programme, Tascomp have released its new test control and monitoring package called Prodigy-ET. Running on a single Windows PC it will control and monitor any test facility, whether it is an engine test cell, gearbox test rig, axle test rig or rolling road.

Prodigy-ET was designed to make full use of Windows NT, which Microsoft have indicated is where the future lies. It is already proving to be a much more stable and reliable platform than previous Windows operating systems and the ever increasing performance of PC hardware makes it an ideal combination for automotive test systems.

In keeping with TASCMASTER-ET, Prodigy-ET can work as a stand alone control system or as part of an



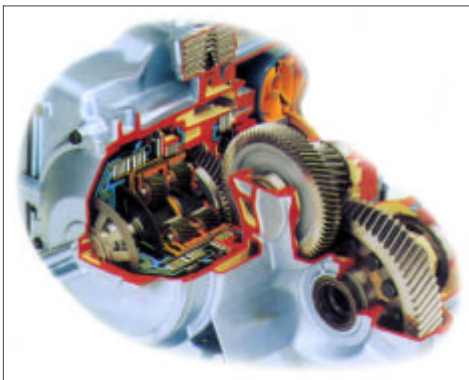
integrated workgroup. A central file server can be used to hold master copies of test files and act in a supervisory monitoring role

Monitoring facilities are also available to remote users through the Prodigy Interconnect package. The test status and any current signal values can then be viewed at any remote location.

Rover Gearbox Test Systems A Success

Two new gearbox test systems were recently installed at a Rover Group site and the standard of the installation has led to positive feedback from both Rover and BMW management.

These competitively priced systems were designed to control three DC motors. This allows the input speed and torque to be defined, along with the required output differential. Gear selection is via a pneumatic system which allows the computer to control the clutch and select the required gear.



The system also performs auxiliary control of other parameters including cooling water and oil level.

Easy Upgrade Route Offered

Tascomp's careful design of the Prodigy-ET package means there is an easy upgrade route for existing TASCMASTER-ET systems.

The configuration of the signal database is directly compatible between the packages and the remote I/O drivers used in TASCMASTER-ET have been ported. Even the continuous trend recordings and valuable test data can be converted into Prodigy-ET formats. Thus the real costs of upgrading older systems to a modern PC platform are significantly reduced.

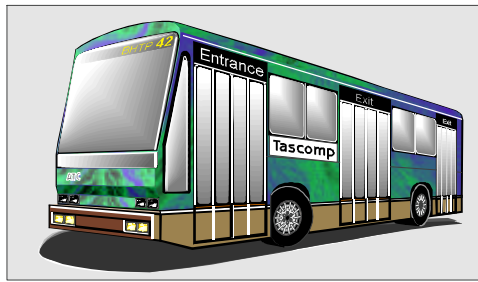
Nissan Orders Dynamic Timing Meters

Further orders for Tascomp's robust dynamic timing meter have recently been fulfilled. After successful trials of a prototype meter, one customer immediately placed orders for the production units.

The meter recalculates the timing every second revolution of the engine and makes use of an intelligent smoothing algorithm to provide a stable result under steady state conditions. The use of a pickup device which is non intrusive and can be quickly installed and removed also makes it ideal for production testing.

Rolling Road Application For Prodigy-ET

Tascomp have recently received an order for the Rolling Road version of Prodigy-ET. It will be used to perform comparative tests on a large fleet of public service vehicles used throughout the UK.



The system will be configured to control the load applied to the rolling road and will adjust a throttle actuator according to predefined automatic test sequences. Control modes will include: throttle position; engine speed; dynamometer load; and gear selection.

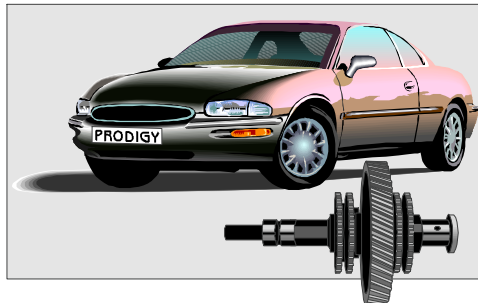
In addition to the standard logging facilities, road speed gear change points, thermostat opening and closing temperatures, maximum oil pressure, minimum battery voltages etc. will all be automatically detected.

A database will also be included to allow the history of a vehicle to be maintained. The reason each test is performed, along with the operator and test sequence, will be logged and users will be able to supplement this with comments and setup information.

The Prodigy Interconnect package will also be used to give remote access to test data and to allow engineers to monitor the current test state and to view individual signal values.

Prodigy-ET Axle Test Rig System Ordered

After the successful implementation of a number of gearbox test systems, one automotive manufacturer has now ordered a Prodigy-ET system for high speed axle testing.



The axle under test will be controlled through a drive motor and by two absorption dynamometers, applying loading to each hub. The test will be defined in terms of the required input motor speed, input motor torque and output differential. The defined conditions will then run automatically for either a defined time or a number of revolutions of the input drive.

inputs will be monitored against alarm levels and test data will be logged according to the defined test sequence. In the event of failure, the system will shut down and a detailed log of the last 5 minutes of running will be available.

In addition to the control parameters, temperature, pressure and vibration

Auxiliary control of various cooling systems will also be undertaken as part of the shock testing.

Key Features

Microsoft Access Format

All test data is held in Microsoft Access database format, which can be manipulated locally, or remotely, in standard PC packages.

Intelligent Recording

In addition to standard snapshot logging facilities, Prodigy-ET uses intelligent algorithms to record continuous charts of all signals in the system. These rolling buffers can typically hold several months of high quality data and can be viewed in the historic trending facility.

Standard Drivers

Drivers are available to allow Prodigy-ET to communicate with a wide variety of equipment, including discrete three term controllers, and serially based I/O.

PC card drivers include Advantech's PCL818HG which provides 8 differential analogue inputs, 1 analogue output, 16 digital inputs and 16 digital outputs, making it an ideal building block for expanding systems.

A driver has recently been introduced for the Burr Brown CTM170 keypad. This is a fully sealed unit which can be used in harsh environments and is ideal as an in cell display for viewing or entering key parameters.

Down Time Monitoring

TASCMaster-ET's down time monitoring package is now available for Prodigy-ET. It ensures that down time periods are accurately attributed reasons and stores the resulting data in Microsoft Access format, making it easy to read into standard PC packages such as Excel.



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