

Building Automation Controls: To Upgrade, Or Not To Upgrade... That Is the Question

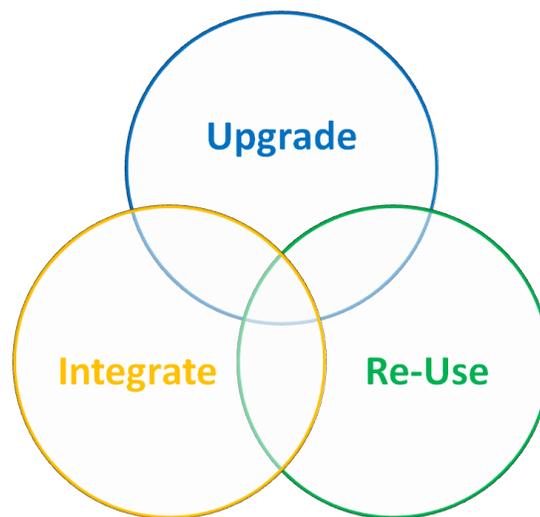
Whether 'tis beneficial to invest in the capabilities and technology of new equipment, or to take arms against a sea of obsolescence, and by opposing, continue to maintain them...

ASSET Technologies addresses this parody of Shakespearean soliloquy by quoting fictional character Tony Stark (aka Iron Man). When asked whether it's better to be feared or respected, he responds with a simple question: ***“Is it too much to ask for both?”***

Fortunately, this same idea can be adopted by many system owners and end-users when faced with the question of whether or not to upgrade their building automation controls.

Options for End-of-Life Products

Ironically, one thing that has been consistent with the state of technology is its ever changing and evolving dynamic. With Building Automation Systems (BAS), this continuous technological evolution results in eventual product life-cycles for any BAS and its accompanying hardware components. New products introduce progressive stages of enhanced system features and capabilities, while legacy products succumb to digressive stages of availability, product support, and functionality.



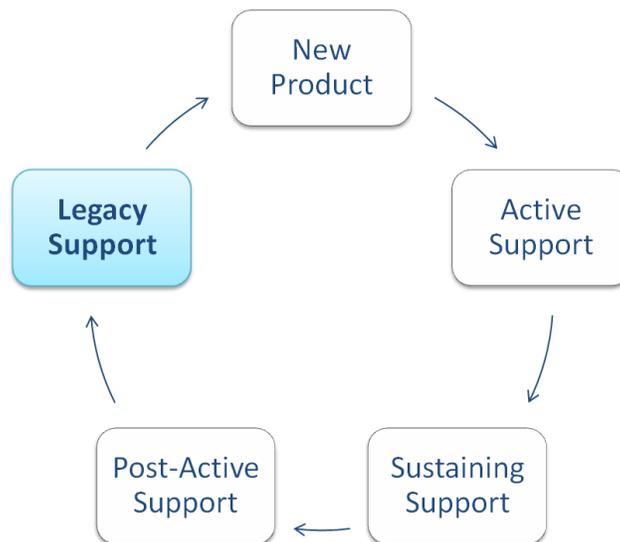
“During a BAS end-of-life stage, a facility operation will typically adopt a hybrid approach by utilizing a combination of three options as they transition to new products.”

Industry analytics estimate building controls systems to have a 7-10 year life-cycle on average ¹, eventually resulting with BAS products reaching end-of-life (EOL). During a BAS end-of-life stage, a facility operation will typically adopt a hybrid approach by utilizing a combination of three options as they transition to new products: Upgrade, Re-Use, and Integrate ². Additionally, before announcing EOL a manufacturer may offer options such as Last-Time-Buy (LTB) as a chance to stock up on spare legacy components before a product is discontinued in order to ease a customer's transition to new technology ³.

Balancing Old & New Hardware

While new BAS technology provides values such as more open connectivity, increased energy efficiency, and advanced program intelligence, building equipment owners must balance these values with factors such as budget restraints, facility down-time, and life-cycle cost analysis. This calls for a more integrated and staggered approach to the upgrade process by maintaining both old and new hardware running simultaneously. Even so, with aging equipment comes potential issues such as glitches, decrease in component and parts availability, support, serviceability, and connectivity ⁴.

Continued Support for End-of-Life Building Automation Controls



“This extended support program is sponsored directly by OEM’s as an added value for customers who still use and maintain existing EOL BAS hardware.”

[ASSET Technologies, LLC](#) effectively resolves these issues by developing comprehensive programs specifically designed to continue support for legacy building automation controls and BAS hardware components. Established in 2008, the company has taken this idea of incorporating an additional layer of product support to a whole new level, going beyond the basic “band-aid” reactive approach to EOL. Its repair solutions program includes complete re-warranty and recertification of EOL or discontinued BAS control modules, sustainable parts

inventory, and technical support. This program has been adopted by over 25,000 building operations worldwide- including major retail chains, hotels, school systems, hospitals and government/municipal facilities- as a way to continue maintaining existing BAS equipment, and stretch the life-cycle of legacy hardware components. This has resulted in benefits such as budget savings and increased ease of transition from old to new technology. ASSET Technologies currently supports legacy controls from major BAS manufacturers such as Novar, INNCOM, Johnson Controls, Barber Colman, and more.

- ✓ Control Module Repair & Re-Warranty
- ✓ Revolving Inventory of Legacy Parts
- ✓ Repair Solutions Development for EOL Products

Official EOL Repair & Support Center for Novar and INNCOM Honeywell



“As an added value for customers who maintain legacy EOL system hardware, both Novar and INNCOM Honeywell are working exclusively with ASSET Technologies as the official and only authorized EOL support center for legacy products.”

As most building owners and facility managers know, one of the keys to a successful facility BAS operation is planning closely with a systems original equipment manufacturer (OEM) ⁵. As an added value for customers who maintain legacy EOL system hardware, both [Novar](#) ⁶ and [INNCOM by Honeywell](#) are working exclusively with ASSET Technologies as the official and only authorized EOL support center for legacy products. As an OEM endorsed support program, ASSET Technologies has received full training and factory support to provide continued repair & warranty for faulty control modules, revolving inventory options for LTB stock, and technical support for legacy systems. This extended support has proven to be an invaluable opportunity for customers to continue utilizing the hybrid approach of maintaining existing equipment while smoothly transitioning to new OEM technology.

The Future: Continuing Support for End-of-Life Products

As technology continues to evolve and legacy products continue to age, the transition from old to new hardware will always be a factor in the foreseeable future for decision makers in the building automation controls industry. While advances such as open network protocols, the

rapidly relevant Internet Of Things (IoT), and new energy/environmental compliance policies ³ all point towards a bright future for the industry, opposing factors such as facility budget restraints, economical & operational limitations, and even increasing demand for companies green initiatives to re-use and recycle ⁷ all move to pace this growth. ASSET Technologies solutions for legacy product support sets a precedence to match this transition by connecting the divide between old and new.

So, when faced with whether or not to upgrade building automation controls, they echo Mr. Stark's response by asking the same question, "Is it too much to ask for both?" And the answer is: Absolutely not!



About the author: Brandon Baisas is the senior marketing associate for ASSET Technologies, LLC. For more information about ASSET Technologies and its solutions for legacy controls products, you can visit them on the web at www.asetechs.net or call them at 502-425-8702.

¹ Salem, Raed. "What Is The Optimal Life Cycle For A BAS?". May 20, 2016. FacilitiesNet (link: <http://www.facilitiesnet.com/buildingautomation/tip/What-Is-The-Optimal-Life-Cycle-For-A-BAS--37034>)

² Perkon, David. "When Not to Replace Legacy Control Systems". 2014. Library.AutomationDirect. (link: <http://library.automationdirect.com/replace-legacy-control-systems-issue-30-2014/>)

³ Amin, Ali Awais. "Seven Steps in Predicting Equipment LifeCycle: Using Obsolescence Management". August 31, 2015. Consulting – Specifying Engineer (link: <https://www.csemag.com/industry-news/codes-and-standards-updates/single-article/seven-steps-in-predicting-equipment-lifecycle-using-obsolescence-management/547c3ac6da4cc7097fc02cea10c097cf.html>)

⁴ Tatum, Rita. "Determining and Stretching the Useful Life of Controls". January, 2011. FacilitiesNet. (link: <http://www.facilitiesnet.com/buildingautomation/article/Determining-and-Stretching-the-Useful-Life-of-Controls--12177?source=part>)

⁵ Belfiore, Michael. "Finding Support for Legacy Control Systems". August 7, 2015. AutomationWorld. (link: <http://www.automationworld.com/continuous-process/finding-support-legacy-control-systems>)

⁶ Novar Controls. "The Novar Product Repair Program". 2016. (link: <http://www.novar.com/repair-program>)

⁷ Winkelman, Patrick. "Sustainable Design of Building Automation Systems". March, 2009. AutomatedBuildings. (link: <http://www.automatedbuildings.com/news/mar09/articles/distech/090219023638distech.htm>)

Tags: Building Automation, HVAC Controls