

AWC Optimizes Automation Project Development using Copia



In the fast-evolving world of industrial automation, managing intricate projects with multiple stakeholders and shifting requirements is a common challenge. AWC, a US distributor and provider of programmable logic controllers (PLCs) and other automation solutions, has consistently navigated this complex landscape to meet the needs of its customers. By integrating Copia Automation's revolutionary version control software, AWC has further enhanced its project development and collaboration processes. This integration has streamlined operations, bringing the efficiency of Industrial DevOps to AWC while reducing errors, minimizing the need for code revisions, and reducing administrative time spent on clarifying project details through emails and other communications. This allows AWC's team to focus more on writing code and delivering high-quality automation solutions.

Advanced Tools for Streamlined Engineering

At the helm of its transformative journey is Matthew Paulissen, AWC's Texas Gulf Coast Regional Engineering Manager. Paulissen recognized the need for

a more standardized approach to managing their engineering projects, which often involved multiple teams working on different aspects of the same project simultaneously.

“One of the biggest challenges we faced before implementing Copia was maintaining a clear history of project versions,” Paulissen explained. “It was crucial for our team members to confidently and quickly identify and access the correct version, with contextual information such as historical comments for the revisions, to collaborate efficiently and avoid costly mistakes.”

Beyond version control and tracking, another significant challenge was Software Configuration Management (SCM), specifically knowing which version was running on a piece of equipment. There could be several versions of the same project in the field, and being confident that you have the correct version for each individual PLC is critical for operations as well as maintenance tasks.

This quest eventually led him to Copia Automation, the leader in Industrial DevOps with a platform that delivers innovative version control solutions tailored to the specific needs of enterprises across the manufacturing and distribution value chain.

“While we were familiar with traditional version control systems like SVN, we felt that a Git-based system would be more robust and flexible,” Paulissen remarked, explaining the rationale behind his search for a better solution.

By leveraging the power of Git, [Copia Automation](#) provided AWC with a centralized repository for all their project code and documentation. This integration allowed for seamless collaboration across teams, regardless of their geographic location or specific roles within the project. Before Copia, there were sometimes duplicate efforts, with team members solving the same problem multiple times to varying levels of quality due to a lack of visibility into existing solutions.

With Copia, employees always have access to the most up-to-date version of projects and libraries, thereby eliminating confusion, significantly improving the visibility of existing solutions, and democratizing access to advanced tools and techniques. This empowers the team to build increasingly sophisticated applications with the consistently high quality that customers expect from AWC.

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With Copia's intuitive interface and powerful search functionality, locating and accessing the necessary files became a breeze. Moreover, the platform's comprehensive version history provide a complete audit trail of all changes made to projects, giving team members the confidence that they are working with the latest and most accurate information.

Beyond Version Control: Enhancing Project Management

Copia's primary focus is to deliver a world-class Industrial DevOps approach and tool kit for industrial automation. Version control is a core component along with other features that deliver a holistic approach to drive organizational improvement.

"The platform's milestones and issue tracking features have been particularly impactful," Paulissen noted, highlighting how these tools have transformed the way his team approaches project management. "With Copia, our engineers can easily see what tasks need to be addressed and in what order. This has greatly simplified the tracking of project progress and has helped us stay on schedule and within budget."

In addition to improving project management, the enhanced transparency and organization provided by Copia have also had a positive impact on internal communication and collaboration. By providing a centralized platform for all project-related information, Copia has made it easier for team members to stay informed and aligned, reducing the need for lengthy meetings and email chains. This has accelerated the delivery of higher-quality solutions to AWC's customers, who have expressed appreciation for the increased efficiency, reliability, and speed of the company's services.

"Copia has made our work more efficient for everyone involved," said Paulissen. "Our engineers save time by not having to constantly update project managers on their progress, and our clients can directly see the status of their projects in real-time, which helps build trust and strengthens our relationships with them."

Since integrating Copia into their workflow, AWC has experienced a noticeable uptick in project efficiency, and provided a level of transparency that promotes the early identification and resolution of potential issues,

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saving the company valuable time and resources. This is particularly important in the industrial automation sector, where even small mistakes can have costly consequences in terms of downtime and lost productivity. Copia's soon-to-be released inaugural State of Industrial DevOps report shows that 50% of all downtime is attributed to code and that, on average, it takes approximately 31 hours to fully resolve code-related downtime. Additionally, respondents noted that debugging code drains approximately 45 hours of work time per month on average.

Focusing on What Matters Most

Perhaps the most significant impact of Copia Automation on AWC has been the way it has augmented the company's work environment and culture. By providing a more organized and efficient approach to project management, Copia has allowed AWC's team members to focus on what they do best: designing and implementing innovative automation solutions that meet the needs of their clients. And there are other intangible efficiencies, such as a heightened sense of understanding across teams, and the ability for anyone to view the project from a broader perspective. Standardizing their processes has translated to greater transparency in AWC's projects, making the transfer of tasks (e.g., training new employees or temporarily substituting personnel) much easier.

"Lots of businesses operate in an environment where workers need to adhere to strict schedules, and their vacation time needs to be a very deliberate, pre-planned event," said Paulissen. "Being able to pick up where a colleague has left off creates a work environment that is less stressful, and more inviting to top talent."

As AWC continues to expand and take on increasingly complex projects, the role of Copia Automation in their success cannot be overstated. By adopting best practices from the world of software engineering and applying them to the challenges of the industrial automation sector, Copia has empowered AWC to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency, quality, and client satisfaction, resulting in more repeat business. This has not only helped the company stay competitive in an increasingly crowded market but has also positioned them as a leader and innovator in their field.

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“Copia has become an indispensable part of our daily operations,” Paulissen stated, emphasizing the platform’s importance to the company’s success. “Its impact is felt in every project we undertake, from ideation to implementation and beyond. At AWC, we believe in Winning Together, and I believe that our partnership with Copia exemplifies that philosophy by fostering collaboration, enhancing efficiency, and driving innovation across our projects. I can’t wait to see where this relationship takes us.”

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Challenges:

- Managing complex automation projects with diverse teams
- Difficulty in tracking and accessing the correct version of project code
- Lack of standardization and organization in engineering processes

Solutions:

- Implemented Copia Automation’s Git-based version control platform
- Centralized storage and management of project code and documentation
- Enabled collaboration, branching, merging, and comprehensive change tracking throughout the project lifecycle, plus added issue tracking and wiki capabilities

Benefits:

- Streamlined and optimized project development, enhancing efficiency and productivity
- Reduced errors, rework, and project delays
- Accelerated delivery of superior automation solutions
- Improved team collaboration, communication, and transparency
- Enhanced documentation and organization
- Boosted client engagement and satisfaction through direct project involvement and visibility

Meet with the Copia team

Visit copia.io to learn how you can implement the Copia Industrial DevOps Platform in your manufacturing business. To learn more about AWC or request their services, please visit www.awc-inc.com or reach out to sales@awc-inc.com.

