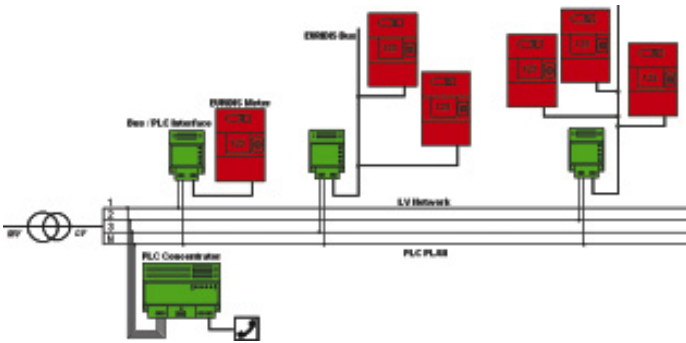


AMR SYSTEM MEETS ROMANDE ENERGIE'S NEEDS

Patrick Mortel, president of the Euridis Association, interviews Marc-Olivier Ramelet of Romande Energie, to find out more about an AMR system recently adopted by the utility.

Patrick Mortel: Tell us a bit about Romande Energie.
Marc-Olivier Ramelet: Romande Energie is a utility which distributes electricity in the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland. It employs 700 people, provides services to 320,000 customers, and owns a co-operative which supplies a further 105,000 people.

PM: What are the characteristics of the Swiss energy market?
M-OR: At the moment Switzerland is very concerned with deregulation. A bill envisages the opening of the energy market to C&I customers in 2007, with domestic customers being able to choose their own supplier in 2012. Romande Energie is preparing for this by changing our structures, our processes and choice of technology, so that we can be more competitive.



Caption.

PM: Why did you introduce an AMR system?
M-OR: The deployment of an AMR system for our domestic customers allows us more flexibility for meter reading, and also for possible new tariffs. The system will be even more cost-effective if the new law requires more frequent readings. Romande Energie, like all electricity, water and gas distributors, is faced with a need to replace a significant number of meters – in our case 15% to 20% of our meter park. We decided to start by deploying the AMR system in buildings with more than ten apartments. This year we have included buildings with three meters that are located in districts equipped with a concentrator.

The system allows the remote management of a relay located in the meter for remote disconnection and reconnection at the request of either

the customer or the utility. We think this will be a valuable feature, but we are not using it yet.

PM: Which AMR system did you choose?
M-OR: The system uses Euridis meters (IEC 62056-31) connected by bus to a PLC architecture (PLAN – IEC 61334-5-1). It is managed by an AMR software program that carries out maintenance checks once a week, to detect malfunctions quickly; and is used for invoicing, when our SAP application needs a reading to send an invoice. These functions are done automatically – we developed an interface between SAP and the AMR software for billing purposes.

PM: Why did you choose the Euridis and PLAN standards?
M-OR: Well, it is possible to connect 100 meters on a Euridis bus. This reduces communication time to 1 to 2 seconds per meter, and therefore reduces the cost of communication. Then Euridis uses a standard 14-character meter enquiry system, which can identify the meter manufacturer, the year of manufacture, the serial number and the type of equipment.

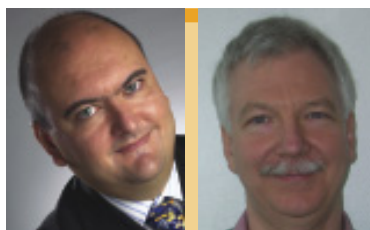
In 2003 Romande Energie began to equip its Euridis buses with PLC (PLAN) interfaces. All these interfaces – and thus all the meters on the same LV network – communicate via a single concentrator managed by telephone. Using our own distribution cables has reduced the costs of communication to the concentrator by a factor of 3. And installation is easy – it doesn't even require special tools.

PM: Does this solution meet your needs?
M-OR: Eighteen months after the pilot project of 5000 meters began, Romande Energie decided to continue with the deployment of the system. By mid-2007 we will have installed 20,000 meters. So yes, our needs have been met. In fact, we now plan to replace C&I meters located in the service territory covered by Euridis, in order to profit from the infrastructure that has already been installed and to be able to read these meters monthly.

PM: How does being a member of the Euridis Association benefit you?
M-OR: We think that the participation of companies like Romande Energie makes it possible to become directly involved in the development of the standards, the equipment and the software.

PM: What developments are you considering?
M-OR: At present Romande Energie only reads active energy registers. The next evolution is remote reading of maximum power values, to be able to equip customers who are invoiced for "energy + power". Thereafter we want to equip our C&I customers with CT meters.

PM: Thank you. **MI**



ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Patrick Mortel (left) has been president of the Euridis Association since 2003. He is a graduate of Polytech'Lille and has been working in the AMR field for ten years.

Marc-Olivier Ramelet (right) is an engineer and project manager in the design department of Romande Energie. He is responsible for the AMR project for domestic customers, and is a graduate of HEC.

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