

## PRESS RELEASE

### **First Expert Forum C-Parts Management Logistics: the motor behind Industry 4.0**

*Bad Mergentheim/Main-Tauber District.* More than 500 invited guests from around the world met for the first Expert Forum C-Parts Management at Industriepark Würth in Bad Mergentheim to discuss the challenges of Industry 4.0, digitalisation and autonomisation in the industrial sector and logistics industry. There are already numerous technological innovations in the logistics industry. Clear trends here are collaboration and self-organising processes. Apart from representatives from Kärcher, KUKA, STILL and Würth, the top-class speakers included Prof. Dr. Michael ten Hompel, for whom logistics play the central role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution marks a change in the industrial sector: everything is developing from a pre-planned and sequential process to an "organism-like, self-organising logistics system", as Prof. Dr. Michael ten Hompel from the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML outlined in his paper "Future location Germany - Challenges and possible solutions in digitalisation". His estimation is that it will be possible in the future to control the complete supply chain using cyber-physical systems such as autonomous vehicles and intelligent applications for the procurement of C-Parts. The Managing Director at the Fraunhofer Institute IML also made clear that German industry had developed an awareness for digital transformation. A recent survey among logistical companies showed that 92% of them did not wish to wait until proven solutions for digitalisation were available. A remarkable step, according to ten Hompel.

### **Driving connectivity ahead together**

For Würth Industrie Service, digital solutions with which C-Parts can be ordered and procured fully automatically on a needs-orientated basis have played an important role for many years. With technologies such as the RFID-Kanban system or new developments such as the iPLACER®, a useful, freely placeable module as add-on for RFID-Kanban, the partner for C-Parts management is driving the digitalisation of processes at its customers forward. In close collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics, the experts at Würth Industrie Service are already developing solutions for the

Würth Industrie Service  
GmbH & Co. KG  
Stephanie Kozany  
Press and Public Relations  
97980 Bad Mergentheim

T +49 7931 91-1153  
F +49 7931 91-51153  
[www.wuerth-industrie.com](http://www.wuerth-industrie.com)  
[Stephanie.Kozany@wuerth-industrie.com](mailto:Stephanie.Kozany@wuerth-industrie.com)

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material procurement of tomorrow. One example of this is iDISPLAY<sup>®</sup>, a digital rack label that in combination with the app CPS<sup>®</sup>MOBILE allows communication from the real to the digital world for the first time. The iDISPLAY<sup>®</sup> recognises its position when it is placed in a rack rail and informs the merchandise management system of Würth Industrie Service of this. Every subsequent change in position is recognised and reported to the app – the rack plan is updated automatically and displayed graphically.

Würth Industrie Service also presented its new XXL-bin W-KLT<sup>®</sup> 2.0 6429 for the manufacturing industry. With a volume of 48 litres and an especially large side flap for direct removal of articles from the rack, the small load carrier facilitates handling of especially large articles. A further new development is the Würth Aluminium Profile System, or WAPS<sup>®</sup> in short, whose more than 150 profiles and more than 3,000 connector variants allow countless possible combinations for the design of ergonomic workplaces. “Innovations need partners at various levels – the developments must be advanced hand in hand both technically and logistically,” says Rainer Bürkert, Executive Vice President of the Würth Group and Managing Director of Würth Industrie Service. Apart from its collaboration with IML, Würth therefore also works on other projects in partnership with, for example, the company STILL and its new iGO neo, an autonomous, people-supporting vehicle.

### **Collaboration is the decisive step**

Collaboration is, however, also very specifically one of the mega trends of the next 25 years in the relationship between man and machine. Having already begun today in the Western world, there will, according to studies, be a shortage of labour worldwide by the year 2050. For manufacturing companies, therefore, digitalisation and utilisation of interfaces between man and machine will play a central role in their future business strategies. Hartmut Jenner, Chairman of the Management Board of Alfred Kärcher GmbH, Thomas A. Fischer, CSO of STILL GmbH, and Dominik Bösl, Corporate Innovation Manager of KUKA Roboter GmbH, illustrated this clearly in their speeches.

Kärcher has embedded digitalisation firmly in its corporate objectives. While internal digitalisation is running in marathon mode, it is working on, for example, new digital business models in sprinter mode. As a manufacturer of forklift trucks and warehouse equipment, autonomisation is a central objective

for STILL GmbH. To improve processing times and combine the advantages of assembly-line production with those of workshop production, industry needs ergonomic tigger trains that organise themselves in a form of swarm intelligence and support people in their work as best possible. KUKA also sees the “robot as colleague” in the not too distant future. To meet mega trends such as connectivity, urbanisation and demographic change, robots will be used increasingly as support. “Using sensitive technology, we have already freed robots from their large safety cages so that they can collaborate directly with people. In the next step mobile robots will come to people – and not the other way round. And then comes smart robotics, in other words the understanding treatment of people by machines,” says Dominik Bösl in describing the development.

### **Shaping change**

But no-one need fear this future, in that all experts are agreed. “One thing is clear: We are only at the very beginning of the Fourth Industrial Revolution – the development has just begun,” explains Michael ten Hompel. “And the experience from the past three industrial revolutions has shown that working people have never become superfluous. The nature of work, however, will change significantly.” It is important, says Rainer Bürkert of Würth Industrie Service, to help shape this change now in order to be prepared for the innovation boost when it comes. That it will come, of this there was unanimous agreement at the Expert Forum C-Parts Management of Würth Industrie Service.

### **Photographic material**

Photo 01



More than 500 invited guests from around the world met for the first Expert Forum C-Parts Management at Industriepark Würth in Bad Mergentheim to discuss the challenges of Industry 4.0, digitalisation and autonomisation in the industrial sector and logistics industry.

Photo 02



Expert panel discussion (from left): Stefan Reuss (Würth Industrie Service), Thomas A. Fischer (STILL GmbH), Dominik Bösl (KUKA Roboter GmbH), Martin Jauss (Würth Industrie Service), Christian Schorndorfer (Würth Industrie Service), Maximilian Kürig (ifp analytics)

#### Short profile

Würth Industrie Service GmbH & Co. KG is the principal supplier for the industry sector within the Würth Group. Since it was founded in 1999, the company has operated at its location in Bad Mergentheim, the Würth Industrial Park, with currently more than 1,420 employees.

To its customers, the company presents itself as a full-service C-part supplier with a specialized product range comprising more than 1,000,000 items, including screws and bolts, fastening and connecting materials, tools, technical chemicals, and PPE.

In addition to its comprehensive standard range, the company's main strength lies in the provision of customized supply and service concepts in logistics and materials planning as well as the supply of special parts. With its CPS® brand – C-Product Service – Würth Industrie Service can offer its customers modular solutions, which can easily be adapted to individual customer needs. Consumption- and demand-driven systems help to streamline the processes for purchasing, logistics and quality assurance, enabling the customer to optimize the costs involved in the procurement of consumables.