

# **The Development of an Integrated Process Operation Management System**

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

.....  
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*To my Grandfather*

*Jure Tabain (January 25, 1921 – November 3, 2003)*

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# SUMMARY

This project details the development of a new framework known as the Coordinated Knowledge Management method to enable complete task integration of all low and mid-level tasks for process industries. The framework overcomes past problems of task integration, which made it impossible to have a fully integrated system and with integration being limited to data acquisition, regulatory control and occasionally supervisory control. The main component of the project includes the use of hierarchically structured timed place Petri nets, which have not previously been used for integrating tasks in intelligent process operations management. Tasks which have been integrated include all low-level tasks such as data acquisition, regulatory control and data reconciliation, and all mid-level tasks including supervisory control and most significantly the integration of process monitoring / fault detection and diagnosis.

The Coordinated Knowledge Management method makes use of hierarchical timed place Petri nets to (i) coordinate tasks, (ii) monitor the system, (iii) activate tasks, (iv) send requests for data updates and (iv) receive notice when tasks are complete. Visualization of the state of the system is achieved through the moving tokens in the Petri net. The integration Petri nets are generic enough to be applied to any plant for integration using existing modules thus allowing the integration of different tasks, which use different problem solving methodologies.

Integrating tasks into an intelligent architecture has been difficult to achieve in the past since the developed framework must be able to take into account information flow and timing in a continuously changing environment. In this thesis Petri nets have been applied to continuous process operations rather than to batch processes as in the past. In a continuous process, raw materials are fed and products are delivered continuously at known flow-rates and the plant is generally operated at steady state (Gu and Bahri, 2002).

However, even in a continuous process, data is received from the distributed control system (DCS) at discrete time intervals. By transforming this data into process events, a Petri net can be used for overseeing process operations.

The use of hierarchical Petri nets as the coordination mechanism introduces inherent hierarchy without the rigidity of previous methods. Petri nets are used to model the conditions and events occurring within the system and modules. This enables the development of a self-monitoring system, which takes into account information flow and timing in a continuously changing environment. Another major obstacle to integration of tasks in the past has been the presence of faults in the process. The project included the integration of fault detection and diagnosis a component not integrated into current systems but which is necessary to prevent abnormal plant operation. A novel two-step supervisory fault detection and diagnosis framework was developed and tested for the detection and diagnosis of faults in large-scale systems, using condition-event nets for fault detection and Radial Basis Function neural networks for fault diagnosis. This fault detection and diagnosis methodology detects and diagnoses faults in the early stages of fault occurrence, before fault symptoms propagate throughout the plant.

The Coordinated Knowledge Management method and the newly developed fault diagnosis module were developed in G2<sup>1</sup> and applied and tested on the Separation and Heating sections of the Pilot plant for the Bayer process at the School of Engineering Science, Murdoch University. Testing indicated that the use of an intelligent system comprising of Petri nets for integration of tasks results in improved plant performance and makes the plant easier to monitor increasing profits. The fault detection and diagnosis module was found to be useful in detecting faults very early on and diagnosing the exact location of faults, which would otherwise prove to be difficult to detect. This would also increase plant safety, reduce wastage and improve environmental considerations of the plant.

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<sup>1</sup> G2 is a commercial programming environment for creating and deploying intelligent real-time applications (Gensym, 1999).

## **References**

Gensym Corporation (1999). *G2 Reference Manual (Version 5.0)*, Cambridge, MA.

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# Table of Contents

---

<i>Table of Contents</i> .....	<i>vi</i>
<i>List of Figures</i> .....	<i>xiv</i>
<i>List of Tables</i> .....	<i>xviii</i>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1.1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1.1</b>
<b>1.2 Coordinated Knowledge Management Method</b> .....	<b>1.4</b>
<b>1.3 Project Aim</b> .....	<b>1.5</b>
<b>1.4 Thesis Overview</b> .....	<b>1.5</b>
<b>1.5 List of Publications</b> .....	<b>1.7</b>
<b>1.6 References</b> .....	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Chapter 2 Review of Integration Techniques in Intelligent Operational Management</b> .....	<b>2.1</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>2.1</b>
<b>2.2 Expert Systems</b> .....	<b>2.3</b>
2.2.1 Knowledge-based expert systems.....	2.4
2.2.2 Limitations of expert systems.....	2.6
<b>2.3 Integration of Tasks</b> .....	<b>2.7</b>
2.3.1 Hierarchical structure .....	2.7
2.3.1.1 Limitations of functional hierarchy .....	2.9
2.3.2 Blackboard architecture (data management) .....	2.10
2.3.2.1 Limitations of the blackboard model .....	2.14
2.3.3 Knowledge management .....	2.15
2.3.4 A framework for integrated process supervision.....	2.16
2.3.5 Other integration methodologies .....	2.17
2.3.6 Coordinated Knowledge Management method: a new approach to task integration .....	2.18
<b>2.4 Case Study</b> .....	<b>2.20</b>

2.4.1	Process description .....	2.20
2.4.2	Control loop configuration .....	2.23
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Expert System Shell .....</b>	<b>2.26</b>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>2.27</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>2.28</b>
<b><i>Chapter 3 Petri Net Basics .....</i></b>		<b><i>3.1</i></b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Definitions.....</b>	<b>3.2</b>
3.2.1	Place transition Petri nets .....	3.2
3.2.1.1	Marked Petri net .....	3.5
3.2.1.2	Enabling and firing rules .....	3.5
3.2.1.3	Properties.....	3.7
3.2.1.4	Modeling using Petri nets .....	3.7
	Sequential execution .....	3.7
	Conflict .....	3.8
	Concurrent.....	3.8
	Synchronization .....	3.9
	Merging.....	3.10
	Confusion.....	3.11
	Mutual exclusion.....	3.11
	Priorities.....	3.12
	Sink transitions.....	3.13
3.2.2	Timed place Petri nets .....	3.14
	Synchronous timing mechanism .....	3.15
3.2.3	Hierarchical Petri nets .....	3.17
3.2.4	Colored Petri nets .....	3.17
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Notation Used in Coordinated Knowledge Management.....</b>	<b>3.18</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>3.19</b>
<b><i>Chapter 4 Modules Encompassing Intelligent Operational Management .....</i></b>		<b><i>4.1</i></b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Low-level Tasks.....</b>	<b>4.2</b>
4.2.1	Data acquisition.....	4.2

4.2.2	Regulatory control.....	4.3
4.2.3	Data reconciliation .....	4.3
4.2.3.1	Problem formulation.....	4.6
4.2.3.2	Gross error detection .....	4.7
4.2.3.3	Estimation of the covariance matrix.....	4.8
4.2.3.4	Detection of steady state.....	4.9
4.2.3.5	Solution methodology .....	4.10
4.2.3.6	Implementation of the data reconciliation module .....	4.10
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Mid-level Tasks .....</b>	<b>4.16</b>
4.3.1	Process monitoring.....	4.16
4.3.1.1	Implementation of the process monitoring module .....	4.17
4.3.2	Fault detection and diagnosis .....	4.20
4.3.3	Supervisory control .....	4.20
4.3.3.1	Problem formulation.....	4.22
4.3.3.2	Solution methodology .....	4.24
4.3.3.3	Implementation of the supervisory control module .....	4.24
<b>4.4</b>	<b>High-Level Tasks .....</b>	<b>4.27</b>
4.4.1	Planning and scheduling.....	4.27
<b>4.5</b>	<b>G2 Implementation of the Intelligent System.....</b>	<b>4.28</b>
4.5.1	Module overview.....	4.28
4.5.1.1	Process schematics .....	4.29
4.5.1.2	Data reconciliation.....	4.30
4.5.1.3	Process monitoring.....	4.33
4.5.1.4	Supervisory control .....	4.34
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>4.36</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>4.36</b>
<b>Chapter 5 Fault Detection and Diagnosis .....</b>		<b>5.1</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Fault Detection and Diagnosis: A Review.....</b>	<b>5.3</b>
5.2.1	Neural networks for fault detection and diagnosis .....	5.6
5.2.2	Supervisory fault diagnosis using Petri nets and neural networks.....	5.10
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Case Study .....</b>	<b>5.11</b>
5.3.1	Simulated faults.....	5.11

<b>5.4</b>	<b>Fault Diagnosis Module.....</b>	<b>5.12</b>
5.4.1	Data collection .....	5.12
5.4.2	Raw data pre-processing .....	5.12
5.4.3	Feature extraction.....	5.12
5.4.4	Selection of ANN topology.....	5.12
5.4.5	Training and testing of the networks .....	5.17
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Fault Detection Module.....</b>	<b>5.17</b>
5.5.1	Plant sections.....	5.17
5.5.2	Mass and energy balances .....	5.18
5.5.2.1	Separation section mass balance.....	5.19
5.5.2.2	Heating section mass balance .....	5.20
5.5.2.3	Boundary sensor .....	5.21
5.5.3	Boundary conditions .....	5.21
5.5.4	Fault detection Petri net.....	5.24
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Total Plant Network .....</b>	<b>5.26</b>
<b>5.7</b>	<b>Results and Discussion.....</b>	<b>5.27</b>
5.7.1	Supervisory fault diagnosis framework: results .....	5.27
5.7.2	Total plant network: results .....	5.28
5.7.3	Petri nets for fault detection: a comparison .....	5.29
<b>5.8</b>	<b>G2 Implementation of Fault Detection and Diagnosis Module.....</b>	<b>5.32</b>
<b>5.9</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>5.34</b>
<b>5.10</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>5.35</b>
<b><i>Chapter 6 Development of Integration Petri Nets.....</i></b>		<b><i>6.1</i></b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>The Coordinated Knowledge Management Method.....</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Types of Places .....</b>	<b>6.4</b>
6.3.1	Process monitoring places .....	6.5
6.3.2	Operator places.....	6.6
6.3.3	State places.....	6.6
6.3.4	DR module input / output places.....	6.6
6.3.5	SC module input / output places.....	6.7
6.3.6	FDD module input /output places.....	6.7

<b>6.4 Integration Petri Nets .....</b>	<b>6.7</b>
6.4.1 Data reconciliation integration Petri net.....	6.8
6.4.1.1 Starting DR.....	6.13
Resource allocation place: DR integration Petri net .....	6.13
Check that the plant is at steady state.....	6.14
6.4.1.2 Raw or nominal values .....	6.15
Data reconciliation using raw values .....	6.15
Data reconciliation using raw and nominal values.....	6.16
6.4.1.3 Request to run DR module .....	6.16
DR module running.....	6.16
6.4.1.4 Error in DR module .....	6.17
6.4.1.5 DR module finished running .....	6.18
6.4.1.6 No sensor drift .....	6.19
6.4.1.7 Sensor drift .....	6.19
Sensor drift and no fault.....	6.19
Sensor drift and fault.....	6.21
Other Places .....	6.21
6.4.2 Supervisory control integration Petri net.....	6.22
6.4.2.1 Starting SC .....	6.27
Resource allocation place: SC integration Petri net .....	6.27
6.4.2.2 Request to run SC module .....	6.28
6.4.2.3 Error in SC module.....	6.29
Error in SC module and fault detected .....	6.30
6.4.2.4 SC module finished running .....	6.31
6.4.2.5 No set point (SP) change .....	6.31
6.4.2.6 SP change .....	6.32
6.4.3 Fault detection and diagnosis integration Petri nets .....	6.33
6.4.3.1 Starting FDD integration Petri net.....	6.39
Resource allocation place: Starting FDD integration Petri net .....	6.40
6.4.3.2 Stopping FDD integration Petri net .....	6.41
6.4.3.3 Fault detected integration Petri net .....	6.43
Fault detected .....	6.45
Fault diagnosed .....	6.45
Fault detected and diagnosed .....	6.46
Operator cannot diagnose fault .....	6.46
6.4.3.4 Repair fault integration Petri net.....	6.51
Plant repairs from auto mode .....	6.53

Plant repairs from manual mode .....	6.54
6.4.3.5 FDD cross connections I.....	6.56
Inter module relationships: DR integration Petri net .....	6.58
Inter module relationship: SC integration Petri net.....	6.59
6.4.3.6 FDD cross connections II .....	6.60
Inter module relationships: DR integration Petri net - fault detected.....	6.62
Inter module relationships: SC integration Petri net – fault detected.....	6.62
Fault repaired .....	6.62
Inter module relationships: DR integration Petri net - fault detected and repaired .....	6.63
Inter module relationships: SC integration Petri net - fault detected and repaired.....	6.63
<b>6.5 G2 Implementation of Integration Petri Nets .....</b>	<b>6.64</b>
6.5.1 G2 implementation of DR integration Petri net.....	6.67
6.5.2 G2 implementation of SC integration Petri net .....	6.69
6.5.3 G2 implementation of FDD integration Petri nets.....	6.71
<b>6.6 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>6.77</b>
<b>6.7 References.....</b>	<b>6.77</b>
<b><i>Chapter 7 An Integrated Run, Conclusions and Future Work .....</i></b>	<b><i>7.1</i></b>
<b>7.1 Summary .....</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>7.2 An Integrated Run.....</b>	<b>7.2</b>
7.2.1 Profit equation.....	7.3
7.2.2 Results.....	7.5
7.3.1.1 Data reconciliation.....	7.6
7.3.1.2 Fault detection and diagnosis I – sensor error .....	7.8
7.3.1.3 Supervisory control .....	7.10
7.3.1.4 Fault detection and diagnosis II – pump faults .....	7.10
7.2.3 Operator comments .....	7.12
<b>7.4 Potential Future Work .....</b>	<b>7.13</b>
7.4.1 Integration of tasks .....	7.13
7.4.2 Fault detection and diagnosis .....	7.15
7.4.3 Industrial implementation: opportunities and challenges .....	7.16
<b>7.5 References.....</b>	<b>7.18</b>
<b><i>Appendices .....</i></b>	<b><i>A.1</i></b>
<b><i>Appendix I FCV-541 OP Versus Flow Characteristic .....</i></b>	<b><i>AI.1</i></b>

<b>AI.1</b>	<b>Description .....</b>	<b>AI.1</b>
	<b><i>Appendix II Petri Net Boundary Conditions .....</i></b>	<b><i>AII.1</i></b>
<b>AII.1</b>	<b>Description .....</b>	<b>AII.1</b>
<b>AII.2</b>	<b>Units Analysis for Graphs.....</b>	<b>AII.2</b>
AII.2.1	Separation section .....	AII.2
AII.2.2	Heating section.....	AII.4
<b>AII.3</b>	<b>Graphs .....</b>	<b>AII.6</b>
AII.3.1	Normal operation.....	AII.6
AII.3.2	Faults originating from Separation section.....	AII.7
AII.1.3.2.1	Fault 1: NUFP-561 pump fault .....	AII.7
AII.1.3.2.2	Fault 2: LT-542 sensor error .....	AII.8
AII.1.3.2.3	Fault 3: LT-501 sensor error .....	AII.9
AII.3.3	Faults originating from Heating section .....	AII.10
AII.1.3.3.1	Fault 4: tank 3 leaking.....	AII.10
AII.1.3.3.2	Fault 5: PP-681 pump fault .....	AII.10
AII.1.3.3.3	Fault 6: LT-667 sensor error .....	AII.11
<b>AII.4</b>	<b>Comments on Fault Graphs .....</b>	<b>AII.11</b>
	<b><i>Appendix III Operators Users Manual Honeywell Scan3000 System.....</i></b>	<b><i>AIII.1</i></b>
<b>AIII.1</b>	<b>Description.....</b>	<b>AIII.1</b>
<b>AIII.2</b>	<b>Manual: Honeywell Scan3000 System.....</b>	<b>AIII.2</b>
AIII.2.1	Process schematic.....	AIII.2
AIII.2.2	Honeywell Scan3000 schematics.....	AIII.3
AIII.2.3	Initial process set points.....	AIII.5
AIII.2.4	Controller settings.....	AIII.5
AIII.2.5	Plant control mode.....	AIII.6
AIII.2.5.1	Manual control.....	AIII.6
AIII.2.5.2	Automatic control.....	AIII.6
AIII.2.6	Initial plant configurations (Honeywell Scan 3000 system).....	AIII.7
AIII.2.7	Charts.....	AIII.8
	<b><i>Appendix IV Operators Users Manual Intelligent System.....</i></b>	<b><i>AIV.1</i></b>
<b>AIV.1</b>	<b>Description.....</b>	<b>AIV.1</b>
<b>AIV.2</b>	<b>Manual: Navigation Throughout the Intelligent System.....</b>	<b>AIV.3</b>

AIV.2.1	Module overview.....	AIV.3
AIV.2.2	Process schematics.....	AIV.4
AIV.2.2.1	Equipment and tables.....	AIV.6
AIV.2.3	Integration Petri nets.....	AIV.6
AIV.2.4	Process monitoring.....	AIV.8
AIV.2.5	Data reconciliation.....	AIV.11
AIV.2.5.1	DR operator input.....	AIV.11
AIV.2.5.2	Raw and reconciled values.....	AIV.12
AIV.2.5.3	Sensors in error.....	AIV.13
AIV.2.5.4	Sensor drift detected.....	AIV.16
AIV.2.5.5	Sensor drift list.....	AIV.17
AIV.2.5.6	Error in the DR module.....	AIV.18
AIV.2.6	Supervisory control.....	AIV.18
AIV.2.6.1	SC operator input.....	AIV.19
AIV.2.6.2	SC new set points.....	AIV.20
AIV.2.6.3	Error in SC module.....	AIV.21
AIV.2.7	Fault detection and diagnosis.....	AIV.22
AIV.2.7.1	FDD operator input.....	AIV.22
AIV.2.7.2	Fault detection Petri net.....	AIV.24
AIV.2.7.3	Boundary graphs.....	AIV.24
AIV.2.7.4	Fault detected.....	AIV.26
AIV.2.7.5	Fault diagnosed.....	AIV.28
AIV.2.7.6	Fault cannot be fixed immediately.....	AIV.29
AIV.2.8	Alarms List.....	AIV.32
AIV.2.9	Other useful G2 commands.....	AIV.32

---

# List of Tables

---

<i>Table 2.1. Process set points.....</i>	<i>2.25</i>
<i>Table 2.2. PI controller settings.....</i>	<i>2.26</i>
<i>Table 3.1. Some typical interpretations of transitions and places (Wang, 1998).....</i>	<i>3.4</i>
<i>Table 4.1. Process sensors .....</i>	<i>4.2</i>
<i>Table 4.2. Definitions.....</i>	<i>4.11</i>
<i>Table 4.3. Parameters and physical properties .....</i>	<i>4.14</i>
<i>Table 4.4. Process monitoring sensors for plant sections.....</i>	<i>4.19</i>
<i>Table 5.1. Simulated faults.....</i>	<i>5.11</i>
<i>Table 5.2. Sensor choices.....</i>	<i>5.13</i>
<i>Table 5.3. Separation RBFNN details.....</i>	<i>5.16</i>
<i>Table 5.4. Heating RBFNN details.....</i>	<i>5.16</i>
<i>Table 5.5. Lower and upper bound values .....</i>	<i>5.22</i>
<i>Table 5.6. Petri net input place descriptions.....</i>	<i>5.24</i>
<i>Table 5.7. List of conditions for fault detection Petri net.....</i>	<i>5.25</i>
<i>Table 5.8. Total plant RBFNN details.....</i>	<i>5.27</i>
<i>Table 5.9. Fault detection times for Supervisory fault diagnosis framework.....</i>	<i>5.28</i>
<i>Table 5.10. Fault detection times for total plant network.....</i>	<i>5.29</i>
<i>Table 5.11. Differences between fault detection Petri nets .....</i>	<i>5.31</i>
<i>Table 6.1. Colors and description for integration Petri net places.....</i>	<i>6.5</i>
<i>Table 6.2. Place descriptions for DR integration Petri net.....</i>	<i>6.12</i>
<i>Table 6.3. Place descriptions for SC integration Petri net .....</i>	<i>6.26</i>
<i>Table 6.4. Place descriptions for FDD integration Petri net.....</i>	<i>6.37</i>
<i>Table 7.1. Test cases .....</i>	<i>7.3</i>
<i>Table 7.2. Event detection and duration times with and without intelligent system (IS).....</i>	<i>7.6</i>
<i>Table AIII.1. Settings for PI controllers.....</i>	<i>AIII.5</i>

---

## List of Figures

---

Fig. 2.1. Expert system architecture (Tzafestas and Verbruggen, 1995) .....	2.5
Fig. 2.2. Functional hierarchy applied to processing plants (Reklaitis and Koppel, 1996) .....	2.8
Fig. 2.3. The elements of a commercial DCS network (Ogunnaike and Ray, 1994) .....	2.9
Fig. 2.4. Fundamental blackboard architecture (Tzafestas, 1997).....	2.11
Fig. 2.5. MORSAF architecture (Kramer and Fjellheim, 1996).....	2.13
Fig. 2.6. Process integration framework (Rengasamy, 1995).....	2.17
Fig. 2.7. Coordinated Knowledge Management method interfacing .....	2.19
Fig. 2.8. Pilot plant at School of Engineering Science .....	2.21
Fig. 2.9. Honeywell Scan3000 overview for Pilot plant.....	2.22
Fig. 2.10. Honeywell Scan3000 screen of Precipitation (Heating) section of Pilot plant .....	2.23
Fig. 2.11. Separation and Heating sections of Pilot plant.....	2.24
Fig. 3.1. Petri net for example 3.1 .....	3.4
Fig. 3.2. Marked Petri net for example 3.2 .....	3.5
Fig. 3.3. Marked Petri net for example 3.3 .....	3.7
Fig. 3.4. Sequential (Wang, 1998) .....	3.8
Fig. 3.5. Conflict (Wang, 1998) .....	3.8
Fig. 3.6. Concurrency (Wang, 1998) .....	3.9
Fig. 3.7. Synchronization (Wang, 1998).....	3.9
Fig. 3.8. Merging (Wang, 1998).....	3.10
Fig. 3.9. Confusion (Wang, 1998).....	3.11
Fig. 3.10. Mutual exclusion (Wang, 1998).....	3.12
Fig. 3.11. Priorities (Wang, 1998).....	3.13
Fig. 3.12. Sink transition.....	3.13
Fig. 3.13. Illustration of a DTPPN (Balbo, 2002) .....	3.15
Fig. 3.14. A driving cycle of a time-driven system (Coolahan and Roussopoulos, 1983).....	3.16
Fig. 3.15. DTPPN for example 3.4.....	3.17
Fig. 3.16. Petri net example for the Coordinated Knowledge Management method notation.....	3.19
Fig. 4.1. Block diagram of Separation and Heating sections of the Pilot plant for data reconciliation.....	4.11
Fig. 4.2. A supervisory digital computer system (Seborg et al., 1989) .....	4.21
Fig. 4.3. Module Overview workspace.....	4.28
Fig. 4.4. Separation section schematic .....	4.29
Fig. 4.5. Heating section schematic .....	4.30
Fig. 4.6. Data reconciliation operator input.....	4.31

<i>Fig. 4.7. Raw and reconciled values</i> .....	4.31
<i>Fig. 4.8. Sensors in error screen</i> .....	4.32
<i>Fig. 4.9. Sensor drift list</i> .....	4.33
<i>Fig. 4.10. Process monitors workspace</i> .....	4.33
<i>Fig. 4.11. Separation and Precipitation (Heating) process monitors</i> .....	4.34
<i>Fig. 4.12. Supervisory control operator input workspace</i> .....	4.35
<i>Fig. 5.1. Typical multi-layered neural network (Tzafestas and Verbruggen, 1995)</i> .....	5.7
<i>Fig. 5.2. Example of an ANN design procedure (Zaknich, 2003)</i> .....	5.8
<i>Fig. 5.3. Supervisory fault detection and diagnosis framework</i> .....	5.10
<i>Fig. 5.4. RBFNN architecture (Zaknich, 2003)</i> .....	5.14
<i>Fig. 5.5. Separation and Heating sections of Pilot plant</i> .....	5.18
<i>Fig. 5.6. Normal operation of Heating section</i> .....	5.23
<i>Fig. 5.7. Faulty operation of Heating section</i> .....	5.23
<i>Fig. 5.8. Petri net representation of ‘AND’ and ‘OR’ rules</i> .....	5.24
<i>Fig. 5.9. Fault detection Petri net for Separation and Heating sections</i> .....	5.26
<i>Fig. 5.10. Fault detection and diagnosis operator input</i> .....	5.32
<i>Fig. 5.11. Boundary graphs</i> .....	5.33
<i>Fig. 5.12. Pop-up workspace to inform operator of fault diagnosed</i> .....	5.34
<i>Fig. 6.1. Coordinated Knowledge Management method</i> .....	6.2
<i>Fig. 6.2. Flow diagram for DR integration Petri net</i> .....	6.9
<i>Fig. 6.3. Data reconciliation integration Petri net</i> .....	6.11
<i>Fig. 6.4. Pop-up workspace for operator input indicating that DR module error has been repaired</i> .....	6.18
<i>Fig. 6.5. Pop-up workspace asking for operator input when sensor drift is detected</i> .....	6.20
<i>Fig. 6.6. Flow diagram for SC integration Petri net</i> .....	6.23
<i>Fig. 6.7. Supervisory control integration Petri net</i> .....	6.25
<i>Fig. 6.8. Pop-up workspace for operator input indicating that the SC module error has been repaired</i> .....	6.30
<i>Fig. 6.9. Flow diagram for running the FDD integration Petri nets</i> .....	6.34
<i>Fig. 6.10. Fault detection and diagnosis integration Petri net</i> .....	6.36
<i>Fig. 6.11. Starting and stopping FDD integration Petri nets</i> .....	6.39
<i>Fig. 6.12. Fault detected integration Petri net</i> .....	6.44
<i>Fig. 6.13. Pop-up workspace asking for operator input regarding fault diagnosis</i> .....	6.47
<i>Fig. 6.14. Pop-up workspace for operator input regarding fault repair</i> .....	6.49
<i>Fig. 6.15. Repair fault integration Petri net</i> .....	6.51
<i>Fig. 6.16. Operator choice workspace for faulty auto plant operation</i> .....	6.52
<i>Fig. 6.17. Pop-up workspace for operator input when plant section is operating in manual mode</i> .....	6.53
<i>Fig. 6.18. Pop-up workspace to indicate when plant repairs have been made</i> .....	6.54
<i>Fig. 6.19. Pop-up workspace to indicate when plant section has been returned to ‘auto’ operation</i> .....	6.55

<i>Fig. 6.20. Fault detection and diagnosis cross connections I</i> .....	6.57
<i>Fig. 6.21. Fault detection and diagnosis cross connections II</i> .....	6.61
<i>Fig. 6.22. Module overview workspace</i> .....	6.65
<i>Fig. 6.23. Task coordination integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.66
<i>Fig. 6.24. Place descriptions on integration Petri net</i> .....	6.67
<i>Fig. 6.25. DR input integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.68
<i>Fig. 6.26. DR integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.69
<i>Fig. 6.27. SC input integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.70
<i>Fig. 6.28. SC integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.71
<i>Fig. 6.29. FDD starting integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.72
<i>Fig. 6.30. FDD stopping integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.72
<i>Fig. 6.31. Fault detection and diagnosis integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.74
<i>Fig. 6.32. Fault detection and diagnosis integration Petri net workspace for the case of a fault detected</i> ...6.74	
<i>Fig. 6.33. Repair fault integration Petri net workspace</i> .....	6.75
<i>Fig. 6.34. FDD cross connections I and II</i> .....	6.76
<i>Fig. 7.1. Sensor drift example</i> .....	7.7
<i>Fig. 7.2. Profit graph for FT-523 / FT-599 sensor drift</i> .....	7.8
<i>Fig. 7.3. Profit graph for Heating fault (LT-667 sensor error)</i> .....	7.9
<i>Fig. 7.4. Profit graph for Separation fault (NUFP-561 leak)</i> .....	7.12
<i>Fig. AI.1. Relationship between the flow of FT-523 and the opening of FCV-541</i> .....	AI.3
<i>Fig. AII.1. Separation section of the Pilot plant</i> .....	AII.2
<i>Fig. AII.2. Heating section of the Pilot plant</i> .....	AII.4
<i>Fig. AII.3. Graph of FT-569 - average<sub>FT-569</sub> versus time for normal operation</i> .....	AII.6
<i>Fig. AII.4. Graph of the Separation_Diff versus time for normal operation</i> .....	AII.6
<i>Fig. AII.5. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for normal operation</i> .....	AII.6
<i>Fig. AII.6. Graph of FT-569 - average<sub>FT-569</sub> versus time for fault 1</i> .....	AII.7
<i>Fig. AII.7. Graph of Separation_Diff versus time for fault 1</i> .....	AII.7
<i>Fig. AII.8. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 1</i> .....	AII.7
<i>Fig. AII.9. Graph of FT-569 - average<sub>FT-569</sub> versus time for fault 2</i> .....	AII.8
<i>Fig. AII.10. Graph of Separation_Diff versus time for fault 2</i> .....	AII.8
<i>Fig. AII.11. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 2</i> .....	AII.8
<i>Fig. AII.12. Graph of FT-569 - average<sub>FT-569</sub> versus time for fault 3</i> .....	AII.9
<i>Fig. AII.13. Graph of Separation_Diff versus time for fault 3</i> .....	AII.9
<i>Fig. AII.14. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 3</i> .....	AII.9
<i>Fig. AII.15. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 4</i> .....	AII.10
<i>Fig. AII.16. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 5</i> .....	AII.10
<i>Fig. AII.17. Graph of Heating_Diff versus time for fault 6</i> .....	AII.11

<i>Fig. AIII.1. Schematic for Separation and Heating section of Pilot plant.....</i>	<i>AIII.2</i>
<i>Fig. AIII.2. Honeywell Scan3000 schematic Separation section.....</i>	<i>AIII.3</i>
<i>Fig. AIII.3. Honeywell Scan 3000 schematic Heating section.....</i>	<i>AIII.4</i>
<i>Fig. AIII.4. Mode of controller operation.....</i>	<i>AIII.6</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.1. Module Overview workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.3</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.2. Modules toolbar.....</i>	<i>AIV.4</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.3. Separation section schematic.....</i>	<i>AIV.5</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.4. Heating section schematic.....</i>	<i>AIV.5</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.5. Sample table FT-523.....</i>	<i>AIV.6</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.6. Task coordination integration Petri nets workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.7</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.7. Place descriptions on integration Petri net.....</i>	<i>AIV.8</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.8. Process monitors for the Separation and Heating section of the Pilot plant.....</i>	<i>AIV.9</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.9. Heating section sensor monitors.....</i>	<i>AIV.10</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.10. DR user input screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.11</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.11. Raw and reconciled sensor values.....</i>	<i>AIV.13</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.12. DR sensor error operator screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.14</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.13. DR sensor details screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.16</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.14. Data Reconciliation dynamically created workspace indicating sensors in error.....</i>	<i>AIV.17</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.15. Sensor drift list workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.17</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.16. Data reconciliation module error screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.18</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.17. SC user input workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.20</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.18. Supervisory control new set points screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.21</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.19. Error in SC module.....</i>	<i>AIV.22</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.20. Fault detection and diagnosis user input screen.....</i>	<i>AIV.22</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.21. Fault detection Petri net.....</i>	<i>AIV.24</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.22. Fault detection boundary graphs.....</i>	<i>AIV.25</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.23. Fault detection and diagnosis integration Petri net fault detected.....</i>	<i>AIV.27</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.24. Fault diagnosed operator input workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.28</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.25. Fault diagnosed workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.29</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.26. Fault diagnosed or fault cannot be fixed immediately workspace.....</i>	<i>AIV.30</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.27. Pop-up workspace for input when plant section is operating in manual mode.....</i>	<i>AIV.31</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.28. Pop-up workspace to indicate when plant repairs have been made.....</i>	<i>AIV.29</i>
<i>Fig. AIV.29. Pop-up workspace to indicate when plant section has been returned to 'auto' operation...AIV.31</i>	