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»Curing« retrofit of automatic psb vehicle system

With a retrofit of the automatic vehicle system (AWT) in the general hospital of the German Armed Forces in Koblenz, Germany, psb intralogistics chose the right »medicine«. Now, breakdowns, caused by out-of-date system components, belong to the past.

The AWT, with its Automatic Guided Vehicles (AGV), is like the underground lifeline of the property. After more than 10 years in operation, without major breakdowns, main system components became finally obsolete, and spare parts were not available anymore, as e.g. the control cards of the control computer, and parts for the ultrasonic protection system, which in the meantime has been replaced by a laser scanner system. Furthermore, there was a lack of spare parts for the infrared data communication, between the master computer and the AGV system.

Due to the extension of the property, the functionality of the hospital can hardly be maintained without the AWT. Therefore, the aim of the retrofit was to equip the system installation with new components, in order to guarantee a reliable, long-term spare parts supply.

The retrofit was carried out by psb intralogistics GmbH, Pirmasens, who had also implemented the entire automatic vehicle system from the start of the operation. The system installation comprises of: the psb *carobot* Automated Guided Vehicle (AGV) system, with 19 inductive AGVs, travelling in a route of 1,700 m, the central monitoring and error reporting system psb *selektron* SCADA, plus the PLCs and container conveyors. The AGVs were modernized step-by-step. At first, however, psb had to convert the communication of all vehicles to WLAN, because the infrared technology, utilized so far, would not have worked in parallel with the laser scanners of the protection system.

The AWT carries out almost 600 transports every day, with 40 meal containers and 172 general-purpose steel containers utilized as load carriers. The vehicles connect the outpatient departments, central sterilization, kitchen, laundry, pharmacy and operating rooms, plus the container wash, waste disposal and the consumables warehouse for the entire property. The hospital wards on the higher levels are reached by lifts.

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The AWT control station co-ordinates and optimizes the transport routes, according to strategic options. psb *selektron* SCADA (visualization system) serves as central control and error reporting system, allowing real time database access.

Pictures / caption



With the modernization, all AGVs were converted to WLAN (on the right, a carobot vehicle of the first generation, with infrared technology; on the left a vehicle with WLAN)



Each AGV can carry each container; thus, empty runs are reduced to a minimum

(All pictures by psb intralogistics GmbH)

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