

SPECIAL SECTION
THE JOURNAL
From Rockwell Automation and Our PartnerNetwork™

SUPPORT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

A vibrant hub of technical support from Rockwell Automation and its PartnerNetwork™ offers online tools that provide quick and easy access to technical documents, a user forum, webinars and more.

By Amanda Joshi, Managing Editor

>> It's 3 a.m., and you're working the midnight shift. A machine goes down. What do you do? If you have access to the Internet, you might find what you're looking for in the Rockwell Automation Support Center. This online Support Center, proactively supported by Rockwell Automation and its Encompass™ Product Partners, offers four main tools:

1. The Knowledgebase.
2. A user forum.
3. A "Submit Questions" feature.
4. A "Chat Live" feature.

These Support Center tools (<https://rockwellautomation.custhelp.com>) extend communication, collaboration and support beyond what you could get from a traditional phone call. You can:

- Troubleshoot and search for answers.

- Request notification updates.
- Access forums.
- Get help with software master disks and activations.
- Download patches, firmware and drivers.
- Manage and organize your account.

In addition, with a TechConnectSM Support agreement (<http://goo.gl/rzb4NU>) from Rockwell Automation, customers can gain even more benefits.

Nearly 400 engineers globally answer calls 24 hours a day, in more than 20 different languages. To enhance the user experience, Rockwell Automation has expanded its support tools in the past few years to provide access to relevant information online.

"The Support Center and all of our online support tools have really become more important, and that's been driven by our customers' needs," says Jon Furniss,



to some of the more frequently asked questions so our engineers can spend more time working on those complex situations where you really need to have a real-time, in-depth interface with an engineer,” adds Langlois.

Knowledgebase: For Engineers

Built by engineers for engineers, the Knowledgebase is a repository of more than 50,000 nonpromotional documents, or technical notes, written and published by Rockwell Automation Tech Support engineers and participating Encompass Product Partners. The Knowledgebase lets you access information quickly, and it’s available in languages that include French, Italian, German, Spanish and Chinese. You can search for answers proactively, and even sign up to receive notifications.

“Allowing our Encompass partners the opportunity to add technical information into the Knowledgebase creates not only more diverse content for our mutual customers,

“Our mutual customers will now find answers to questions they may have about RACO’s products and how to integrate them with Allen-Bradley PLCs.”

— James Brown, RACO Mfg. & Engineering Co.



Online & Telephone Support product manager, Rockwell Automation.

“When you look at the new generation of engineers, the first thing they want to do is see how they can solve the problem themselves — online. So that’s why we built the Knowledgebase — and continue to expand it — so customers can go and solve problems on their own,” notes Cathy Langlois, business director, Services & Support for Rockwell Automation.

Also, the vast number of workers approaching retirement prompts the need for an online database that captures legacy information before that knowledge leaves the workforce.

More online tools also spur productivity. “Users want answers and information before they have a problem; they want to be able to look something up before they do something; they want to know best practices. And so the Support Center really allows easier access to a lot of that information,” explains Furniss.

“The Support Center is a great productivity tool. It allows our customers to find answers

but also richer content — content not found in the start-up guide or user manual, but information collected and shared from many domain experts who are working together,” adds Kim Porter, program manager, Encompass Partner Program.

“Typically, when users have an issue with a ProSoft Technology product, they contact us directly. Now that our technical articles, technical videos and walkthroughs are available in the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase, they may be able to get their issue resolved without ever needing to contact us,” says Chris Hines, technical services manager with Encompass Product Partner ProSoft Technology (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-prosoft).

“The Knowledgebase is an excellent resource for customers to quickly get their questions answered by the experts in the market. It’s a great tool to expand your application knowledge and provide the information to design and maintain the best solution possible,” adds Dennis Fairfield, sales manager - North America,

Watch this
Support Center
demo with
layar



“The Knowledgebase provides easy access to integration information ... and can also alert users to important information before they begin an integration project.”
— Felix Klebe, Mettler-Toledo

Encompass Product Partner HMS Industrial Networks (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-hms) and participating Knowledgebase contributor.

The Knowledgebase is updated continually with new documents from Rockwell Automation and its Partners, and existing documents are refreshed as information becomes available.

For example, “If a customer calls with a question, and that answer is not in the Knowledgebase, we will add it,” says Furniss. “Users then can rate answers in the Knowledgebase, and if they have any comments to the answers provided, they have the ability to send direct feedback to the Tech Support engineer who developed the document.”

In fact, it’s the opportunity to provide feedback that drives much of what’s in the Knowledgebase, and that includes information on Encompass Partner products. “It took some smart customers, when asked how they use our PartnerNetwork, to tell us that adding Encompass Partner technical data into Knowledgebase was a way to help them identify more integrated solutions,” says Paula Bognar, manager, Business Partnering - Encompass Program.

Another result of customer feedback is the inclusion of how-to videos in the Knowledgebase. “If you think about it, if you buy a lawnmower and you want to know how to change the oil, do you go and read the manual, or do you go onto YouTube and watch a 5-minute video? A lot of our customers are the same way,” Furniss says.

Furniss encourages customers to use the Knowledgebase and other online support tools before problems surface, as a way to improve efficiency. “The Knowledgebase can really be more than just a problem-solving tool; it can be a tool where users find best practices and things to watch for — it’s more of a productivity and learning tool,” he notes.

For example, the Knowledgebase could help answer design-related questions, and the user forums might prompt a discussion between members on best practices for network devices.

“We can help manufacturers be much more efficient and much more productive, but they have to think that way and not just think to call or interact with us online when there’s a problem,” Furniss says.

Vital Partner Participation

Encompass Product Partners play a key role in the Knowledgebase. They create a more lively center of technical content by providing documents and support, participating in Genius Webinars, and monitoring threads relevant to their domain expertise in the user forum. Current partners in the Knowledgebase include Encompass Partners HMS Industrial Networks, Mettler-Toledo, Online Development Inc. (OLDI), ProSoft Technology, and RACO Mfg. & Engineering Company. Expect to see more partners participating in the near future.

These Encompass Partners also work closely with Rockwell Automation support engineers to educate them on their Encompass-referenced products. So, when you need to find solutions about Partner products, Rockwell Automation engineers can help.

“Cross training our support staff and our PartnerNetwork companies with regular hands-on training seminars is helping raise the level of our capabilities and conversations with joint customers about not only complex systems, but also pre-sales activities,” says Porter.

“When customers can go to one spot to find solutions not only for our products but our Partners’ products, it makes their life a lot easier,” adds Furniss.

“The Knowledgebase provides easy access to information on how to best integrate our weighing terminals with Rockwell Automation equipment,” says Felix Klebe, weighing terminals strategic product group leader, Mettler-Toledo (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-mettlertoledo). “The Knowledgebase information can also alert users to important information before they begin an integration project.”

“Having access to the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase enables customers to troubleshoot many problems themselves, especially during off-hours when normal phone support is not available,” notes Bob Muniza, Product Sales for OLDI (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-odi).

“We have heard many customers compliment the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase, which is why we chose

“Access to the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase system enables customers to troubleshoot many problems themselves, especially during off-hours when normal phone support is not available.”
— Bob Muniza, Online Development, Inc. (OLDI)



More online tools help spur productivity.

the same system when we switched our Knowledgebase platform two years ago. Now, customers used to using the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase can experience a similar look and feel when using OLDI's. This also makes it easier to maintain Knowledgebase answers that we choose to duplicate in the Rockwell Automation system," he adds.

Encompass Partner RACO Mfg. & Engineering Co. (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-raco) also uses the same Knowledgebase system for its own support, and has since migrated 350 of its "frequently asked questions" about RACO Encompass-referenced products into the Rockwell Automation Support Center. With the help of the Language Weaver technology provided by Rockwell Automation, all of RACO's documents are translated into local languages.

"Our mutual customers will now find answers to questions they may have about RACO's products and how to integrate them with Allen-Bradley PLCs," says James Brown, vice president of Sales and Marketing, RACO.

"Taking part in the Knowledgebase program was really a no-brainer for us. We feel the more avenues a customer has in getting a resolution to a problem, the quicker they'll solve their problem, and the happier they will be," adds ProSoft's Hines.

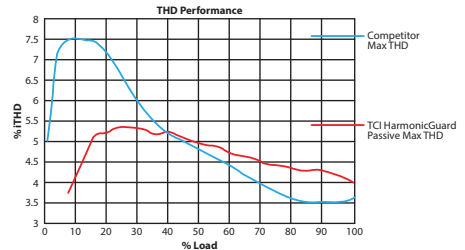
Genius Webinars

Another useful tool is the Genius Webinars. Each month, Rockwell Automation Tech Support engineers and Encompass Partners present webinars to address the most




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"The Knowledgebase is an excellent resource for customers to quickly get their questions answers by the experts in the market."

— Dennis Fairfield, HMS Industrial Networks



commonly asked questions they receive. The technical, noncommercial, one-hour sessions are recorded live and then posted in the Knowledgebase where you can download them any time.

"These segments allow you to learn about a specific issue, something you might not otherwise have a lot of time to attend a class on," says Langlois.

Another benefit of the Genius webinars is the opportunity to hear questions from peers. Often, you don't realize you have the question until you hear someone else voice it, providing a new learning opportunity.

"Integrating Wireless Technology into Manufacturing Systems" by ProSoft Technology, "How to Build a Tank Hopper and Vessel Weighing System" by Mettler-Toledo, "Troubleshooting OPC Communications," and "Using VMWare in Manufacturing Industries" are just a

>> Upcoming TechConnect Webinar Topics

Visit the Rockwell Automation Knowledgebase at <https://rockwellautomation.custhelp.com> and log in or create an account to learn more about upcoming genius and educational webinars, download previous webinars and receive notifications on topics of interest. Recent and upcoming webinar topics include:

- Taking Advantage of Available Open Source Tools
- Integrating Verbatim Gateway and Alarm Autodialer Systems with Rockwell Automation
- PLCs in Unattended SCADA or Process Monitoring Systems by RACO
- Best Practices for Using EtherNet/IP
- CAN and CANopen Protocols by HMS Industrial Networks
- Installing and Commissioning Drives
- Manage the Obsolescence Risk of Legacy Products
- Increase Production Throughput with Application Support
- Identify and Fill Workforce Knowledge Gaps with Training Advisor
- Enterprise Data Exchange for ControlLogix by Online Development Inc.

Built by engineers for engineers, the Knowledgebase contains more than 50,000 documents.

few of the many Genius webinar topics now available on demand, ready to download.

In addition, many users have requested more information about a certain product, service or tool. Recently launched educational webinars address this demand for product-related webinar sessions.

Recent educational webinars topics include “Monitor and Manage Equipment from Anywhere Using Virtual Support Engineer” and “Regulate Ethernet Traffic with the Network Address Translation Module.”

More Ways to Connect

The Support Center also includes a user forum where you can talk to other users in the 120,000-member community, in addition to Rockwell Automation Tech Support engineers and Encompass Partners, about a variety of support topics.

With the “Submit Questions” tool, you can email Tech Support. “If you have a question on a product, and a response is not time-critical, you can send an email and we’ll get back to you within 24 hours,” says Furniss.

If you have a TechConnect Support agreement, you can go online and chat with Tech Support engineers. “This is a popular feature for a couple different reasons,” Furniss explains. When engineers are on the plant floor and have a question for Tech Support, it’s difficult to hear in a loud environment. Instead of calling, they can chat with an engineer online while remaining at the machine to troubleshoot.

In addition, the whole transcript of your chat conversation is logged and saved in your Support Center account and emailed to you.

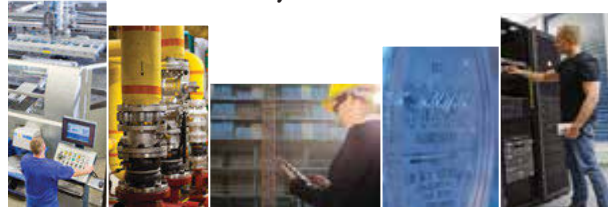
Note: Tools such as “Submit Questions” and “Chat Live” have not been extended at this time to partners. However, Encompass Product Partner Spectrum Controls Inc. (www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-spectrumcontrols) has an expanded agreement with Rockwell Automation, and technical support for their products is fully provided by Rockwell Automation Technical Support at no charge.

The final section of the Support Center allows you to download documents, see all your service tickets, sign up

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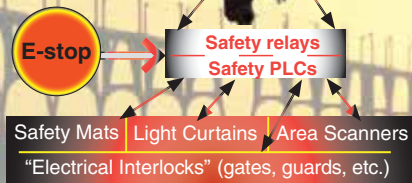
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— Chris Hines, ProSoft Technology



Encompass Product Partners work closely with Rockwell Automation support engineers to educate them on their Encompass-referenced products. Here, ProSoft Technology and Rockwell Automation participate in a training seminar.



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“Everything we do is about trying to get the information into customers’ hands as quickly and easily as possible.”
 — Jon Furniss, Rockwell Automation.



for notifications, tag answers as favorites and save them to your account.

Getting Started

To access the information in the Support Center, visit <https://rockwellautomation.custhelp.com>, create an account and log in. Registration is free! If you have a TechConnect Support agreement, log in with your authorization number. While certain parts of the Knowledgebase and forums are accessible to everyone, “Submit Questions,” “Chat Live” and some webinars are available only to TechConnect agreement holders.

By registering, you’ll be able to provide valuable feedback to Rockwell Automation Tech Support engineers and gain a unique support base to help you boost productivity, reduce downtime and maintenance costs, and improve efficiency. □

Rockwell Automation Support Center
<https://rockwellautomation.custhelp.com>