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SGS' ADVANCED SYSTEMS GROUP RELEASES NEW VERSION OF THE AHEAD INTELLIGENT ASSET PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

The Advanced Systems Group of SGS is pleased to announce the release of the latest version of its flagship AHEAD (Asset Health, Effectiveness and Diagnostics) toolkit for Intelligent Asset Performance Management in the resource and manufacturing industries.

Plants using SGS's AHEAD can expect increases in average throughput while maintaining or improving product quality. Plant managers and their team will be automatically alerted to developing process or equipment problems and have the root cause(s) pinpointed, so that corrective actions happen before production or quality is compromised. Mine managers can plan and proactively act on the top issues impacting production to optimize results using real time dashboards of their mine's performance.

AHEAD is an advanced (process) condition monitoring system which can intelligently analyse and assess plant asset (e.g. equipment) performance on a continuous basis. SGS developed AHEAD in partnership with BHP Billiton and Barrick Gold Corporation in 2004. Now a comprehensive and effective tool, AHEAD helps you achieve and measure compliance with operational excellence standards, with the ultimate goal of better asset utilisation, optimized product quality and lower operating costs.

AHEAD reliably automates process monitoring and troubleshooting tasks to consistently and quickly detect deviations from desired performance targets (Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs). The system then diagnoses the cause(s) of such deviations and recommends appropriate actions to rapidly return the process to normal operation.

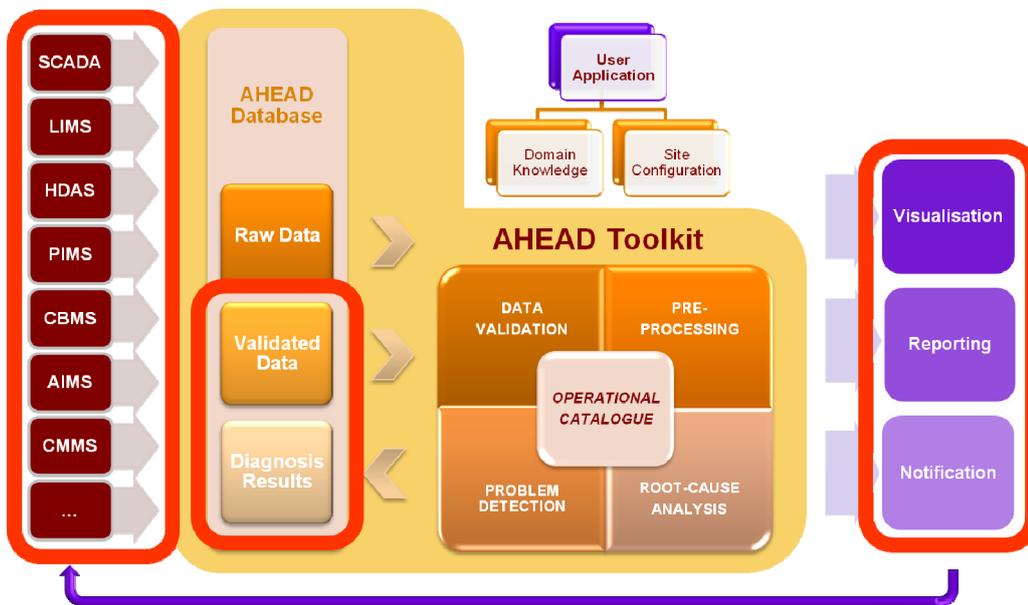


Fig. 1 AHEAD functionality summary

One of the unique strengths of AHEAD is its fully-automated Root Cause Analysis (RCA) functionality which is based on heuristics (modelling the troubleshooting reasoning of the process or asset specialist). This methodology provides a framework for real-time fault management in large-scale systems while protecting the operator from “alarm-flooding” and increased workloads. Easy-to-use web-based displays of diagnosis results



allow the asset operator to quickly focus on the causes of poor performance. Key features allow for a series of steps to address the issues raised in the diagnosis:

- Context-sensitive, best-practice, corrective action can be determined.
- Dynamic drill-downs provide additional detail for those wishing to follow and understand how the indicated root causes were determined for a given problem.
- Automatic reminders allow more persistent plant issues to be “shelved” for further investigation or pending their resolution by others.

Data quality is a fundamental concept in AHEAD. From a raw source quality to a derived quality assigned during a KPI calculation, AHEAD is structured to present its outcomes and conclusions with an indicated confidence in the result. This allows for a focus on events driven by good quality data. As a result, incidents of false-positives and misleading (or “noisy”) diagnoses are dramatically reduced.

Performance monitoring of an asset typically involves manual analysis of potentially vast quantities of process data, often subject to individual and possibly differing interpretation. In contrast, AHEAD delivers concise and targeted communication in a consistent and repeatable manner within a plant organisation. At operating sites where AHEAD has been integrated into staff’s performance management culture the approach enables closer adherence to operational discipline, helps standardise Performance Management within unit operations, and ultimately reduces or eliminates the impact of operational loss events.

AHEAD can further play a role in consolidated control centres, where centrally-located specialists and operators manage several geographically dispersed and at times remote operating sites. Consolidation of large volumes of data and events from several sites has the potential to rapidly overwhelm the control centre staff; being able to react to a prioritised problem list and quickly identify each problem’s causes will be of paramount importance to the centre’s and each site’s effective operation. AHEAD is specifically designed to provide such decision support - trust SGS to deliver quality solutions to contain costs, reduce risk and enhance value.

ABOUT SGS

The SGS Group is the global leader and innovator in inspection, verification, testing and certification services. Founded in 1878, SGS is recognized as the global benchmark in quality and integrity. With 59,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 1,000 offices and laboratories around the world.

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