

PRESS RELEASE

Phoenix Contact to use Swissbit Industrial-Grade Memory for Secure Portable Licensing

Phoenix Contact will manage the distribution of software licenses for its PLCnext Control automation platform using secure industrial-grade memory cards from Swissbit

Westford, MA USA. July 12, 2021 – Swissbit reports that a collaborative venture with industrial automation specialist Phoenix Contact has resulted in the global market leader adopting Swissbit's secure industrial SD card memory as the solution for its license protection. The Data Protection Edition of the Swissbit PS-46 DP SD-memory card functions as a secure license container while accelerating the roll-out and commissioning process for Phoenix Contact customers. While the development program took place in Germany, the secure product is available throughout the USA and for all markets worldwide.

Phoenix Contact implements the creation and distribution of licenses for paid apps in its PLCnext Store, including for its PLCnext Control, which is part of an open ecosystem combining controllers, modular engineering software and cloud integration to meet all the requirements of the IoT world. In addition to pre-installed software tools, system integrators and machine builders can integrate further software applications (apps) that require a license into their PLCs to increase the range of functions.

To guarantee customers the greatest degree of flexibility, a decision was made in favor of a removable storage medium for licensing. That medium had to meet stringent requirements in terms of security and durability, and also serve as a hardware security anchor for licenses. The SD card form factor was selected as an established format in the field of PLCs due to its compactness. Other considerations to ensure reliable operation at all times included proven capability in harsh industrial environments, insensitivity to temperature fluctuations and the long-term availability of the product.

The PS-46 DP (DP = Data Protection) from Swissbit is a Secure SD card on which data stored in the flash memory is encrypted on the hardware side with AES. The speed class 10 card is based on highly reliable pSLC technology and is specified for industrial use at operating temperatures of -40°C to +85°C. The necessary security for Phoenix Contact applications is ensured by a two-stage procedure that uniquely links the relevant license file with the corresponding memory card. Among other things, the unchangeable identification number (Unique ID) of the SD card mapped in the hardware is used, which is supplemented by a serial number generated by Phoenix Contact. In addition, a checksum stored in a protected and hidden memory area on the SD card firmly connects and protects the license(s) without impairing portability.

Flexible protection and fast commissioning.

The portable license protection solution saves time when commissioning a PLC from the PLCnext Control platform. When ordering and purchasing, customers simply select the apps requiring a license for applications for the free PLCnext Engineer software. The SD card then functions simultaneously as a storage medium and as a license dongle, enabling customers to program the PLC according to their requirements and to configure it for use in a plant. Typical constraints where licenses must first be activated individually via a computer at the integrator's facility or at the end user's site are eliminated, which is a key consideration where large numbers of controllers are to be rolled out simultaneously. Another advantage arises in the unlikely event of a defective PLC; here, the software license remains active and can be easily transferred to a new control.

Rudolf Braun, Product Management Control Systems at Phoenix Contact, comments: "The convenient roll-out and rapid commissioning of a PLC, including the required app licenses, is an essential requirement of our customers. The solution designed in partnership with Swissbit fulfils this exact requirement and at the same time offers the greatest possible protection for our software licenses."

The PS-46 DP Secure SD card will be offered by Phoenix Contact with memory capacities of 8GB and 32GB as part of the PLCnext Control portfolio. Founded in 1981, Phoenix Contact's US operation was one of the company's first international subsidiaries. The US firm is headquartered in Harrisburg, PA.

Available images

The following images are available for download in printable format at:

<https://kk.htcm.de/press-releases/swissbit/>

 <p>Image Source: Swissbit</p> <p>The Swissbit memory card PS-46 DP in the Data Protection Edition functions as a secure license container for software applications of the control platform PLCnext Control.</p>	 <p>Image Source: Phoenix Contact</p> <p>PLC of the Phoenix Contact automation platform PLCnext Control in different performance classes.</p>
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Image Source: Phoenix Contact

**The Phoenix Contact USA
headquarters in Harrisburg, PA.**

About Swissbit

Swissbit AG is the only independent European manufacturer of storage and embedded IoT solutions for demanding applications. Swissbit combines its unique competences in storage and embedded IoT technology with its advanced packaging knowhow. This expertise allows Swissbit customers to reliably store and protect data in critical industrial, NetCom, automotive, medical and finance applications as well as across the Internet of Things (IoT).

Swissbit develops and manufactures industrial-grade storage and security products “Made in Germany” with high reliability, long-term availability, and custom optimization.

Swissbit’s storage range includes SSDs with PCIe and SATA interface such as mSATA, Slim SATA, CFast™, M.2 and 2.5” as well as CompactFlash, USB flash drives, SD Memory Cards, microSD Memory Cards and managed NAND BGAs like eMMC. Security products are available in various application specific editions as USB flash drives, SD Memory Cards, and microSD Memory Cards.

Swissbit was founded in 2001 and has offices in Switzerland, Germany, USA, Japan and Taiwan. Swissbit owns the registered trademarks Swissbit® and Hyperstone®. Since 2020, the independent investment firm Ardian is holding a majority stake in the company to support its growth.

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