

Making the Most of your ISA Membership: ISA Technical Divisions

By Graham Nasby

This article is part of a series of articles about taking advantage of the resources and opportunities that come with your ISA membership.

This issue's column was originally going to be about ISA Division symposia, but it occurred to me that I need to first talk about ISA technical divisions. It is the divisions that put on the technical symposia, so to understand the symposia one must first look to the ISA's divisions.

To some the ISA can appear to be a very large and complex organization. With over 30,000 members around the world, it is not surprising that there are many different aspects and parts to the ISA as an organization. For many ISA members, there are two main ways they tend to get involved: ISA sections and ISA divisions.

ISA sections are typically associated with geographical areas. For example, the ISA Hamilton section is focused on the area around Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Sections focus on providing events for ISA members in their local geographical area. Since section members are typically close by, section activities are usually face-to-face events such as member meetings, plant tours and workshops.

For divisions the breakdown is not geographical. Divisions are instead defined by common technical areas of interest, industry classifications, and/or specific technical topics. For example there is a division for the water/wastewater sector and there is another division focused entirely on process safety. Furthermore there are divisions for automation professionals that are interested in topics such as automatic control and robotics, the construction industry, and even automation management. Because divisions are not geographically based, division members can be from all over the world – and they often are!

Within the ISA there are two main groupings of divisions. The first is the "Industries and Sciences" department and the second is the "Automation and Technology Department". The first grouping is focused more on certain industries or sectors, while the second is more technology based. The current list of ISA divisions is as follows:

Divisions in the Industries and Sciences Department

- [Aerospace Industries Division](#)
- [Building Automation Systems](#)
- [Chemical & Petroleum Division](#)
- [Construction & Design Division](#)
- [Education Division](#)
- [Food & Pharmaceutical Division](#)

- [Glass & Ceramics Technical Interest Group](#)
- [Mining & Metals Division](#)
- [Power Industry Division](#)
- [Pulp & Paper Division](#)
- [Textiles Technical Interest Group](#)
- [Water & Wastewater Division](#)

Divisions in the Automation & Technology Department

- [Analysis Division](#)
- [Automatic Controls and Robotics Division](#)
- [Communications Division](#)
- [Management Division](#)
- [Process Measurement & Control Division](#)
- [Safety Division](#)
- [Test Measurement Division](#)

In a future column, I will give an overview of each of the divisions and what its focus is. However, for the time being there are several common things between the divisions that I will touch on.

Divisions will typically have an email mailing list and/or LinkedIn discussion group associated with them. The email mailing lists and discussion groups give automation professionals in that particular area a venue to talk about common technical problems, share areas for process improvements, and network with each other.

Divisions can be quite active when it comes to newsletters. Some divisions publish a quarterly newsletter, while others do it annually – it all depends on the preferences of the individual division. Division newsletters provide another avenue for ISA members interested in a particular area to share knowledge and network with each other.

Lastly, some of the larger divisions put on annual symposia for their specific area of interest. For example, the ISA Power division has an annual symposium that has papers and presentations on topics concerned with power plants and the electric power industry in general/. Likewise, the ISA Water/Wastewater Industries Division and the Management Division also put on their own area-specific symposia. I will be providing an overview of the various ISA division symposia in a future column.

For more information ISA technical divisions visit the ISA website at www.isa.org/divisions

NEXT ISSUE: ISA Divisions – Industries & Sciences

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