

Oh, No! It's ALIVE!

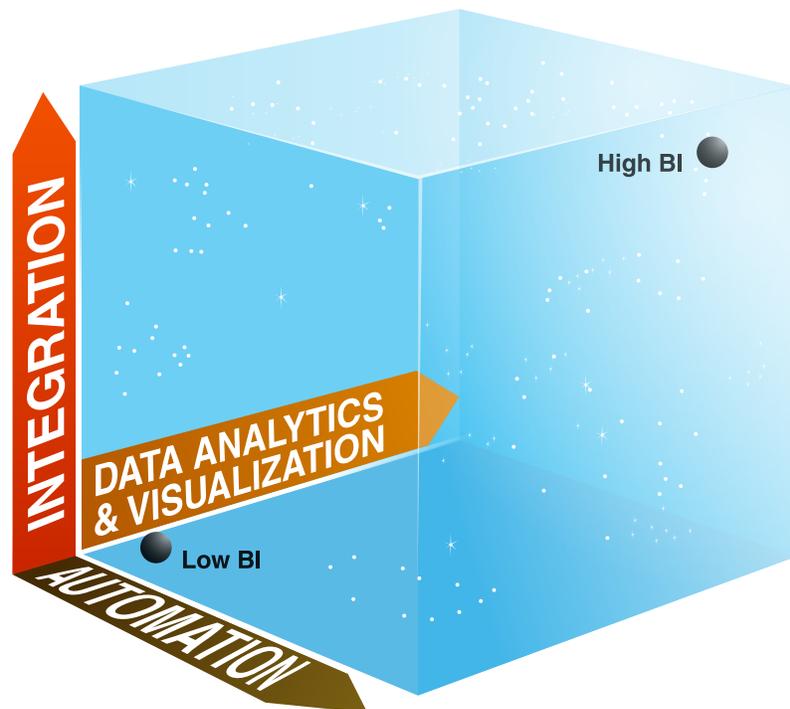
(Do We Really Want Smart Buildings?)

Science fiction books and films are replete with the theme. You know, when “it” becomes sentient and begins to take over the world? “It,” by the way, could be a computer system, a robot, or some other “thing.” And it’s never a good thing—that is until the humans finally wake up, fight back, and realize that they put way too much faith in that thing.

So when the subject of smart buildings or building intelligence comes up, we might be tempted to recall Terminator-like scenes and head for the hills in fear.

Well, okay, maybe not. But it is a good time to consider what we are really trying to achieve. After all, the facility should work for us, not the other way around. Let’s see if we can’t give our facilities just the right amount of smarts.

Think of building intelligence as represented by X, Y, and Z axes in space. These axes represent the elements that are essential to building intelligence (BI). Let’s refer to the X-axis as “Automation.” Let’s call the Y-axis, “Integration.” And, the Z-axis will represent “Data Analytics & Visualization.”



Now, imagine these axes forming an infinite cube. Near the intersection of the axes, where all three elements are low, building intelligence (BI) is also low. But as we make progress on any axis, BI improves. When we have a high amount of all three elements, BI is at its zenith.

The low hanging fruit here is Automation. By simply automating any of your building systems, you gain efficiencies, lower costs, and begin to capture data. As we then bring various systems together (integration) our efficiencies are increased, our costs can be lowered, and our data more valuable. After all, who wants to log into 15 different systems just to get a handle on the operation of their building?

What systems can be automated and integrated? Certainly all of the standard systems are eligible (heating/cooling, ventilation, lighting, access, fire/life safety). But then consider unconventional ones like fenestration, renewable energy sources, elevators, mass notification, emergency power, or even garage parking.

BACnet control is your ticket to achieving automation of any such system and the integration of various systems. It is the de facto standard for building system communications.

Now, because data is so vital to your facility operations today, the third axis deserves some attention. Your building automation and control system is capable of collecting, trending, logging, and displaying a tremendous amount of data. Further, BACnet can do so predictably and reliably.

But there are also third party approaches and bolt-on packages out there that can help you make better sense of all this data. Together these data analytics and associated data visualization packages make for better management and higher building intelligence, especially across a portfolio of properties.

So, let's push the limits along these three axes and get the smartest building on the block. And should your facility ever become self-aware . . . well, you can always head for the hills.

For More Information

If building intelligence is your goal, turn to KMC Controls for answers. For more than 40 years, we have designed and manufactured control system hardware and software for flexible building automation and building system integration. We remain the only privately held U.S. manufacturer to offer a complete line of components and digital automation systems.

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