

Taking a Bold Step—With Eyes Wide Open

BY BOB RENNARD, PRESIDENT, LXI CONSORTIUM

During the development of the LXI promotional plan, the consortium's marketing committee was concerned about how we should communicate our intentions to people who create test systems. Overly bold statements about the demise of GPIB could scare off some who have a large inventory of test equipment. Vague promises of frothy benefits might fail to capture the imagination of those who can truly benefit from LAN as their system I/O.



If you've seen the consortium's full-page advertisement for LXI, then you already know that we ultimately chose a bolder approach. But it took long hours of discussion to get there.

In our wee-hours deliberations, we were emboldened by stories from members who had presented LXI to system creators. More often than not, the reaction was "It's about time!"

Still, we didn't want to give anyone the impression that they should throw away their hard-earned expertise in automated test systems. Yet, we wanted to proclaim our mission: provide a modern, long-lived successor to GPIB—not just *a* successor, but *the* successor.

A Shakespearean successor often ascends the throne in a noisy, dramatic, and messy fashion. In contrast, LXI will take a patient, logical, and professional approach, much like the talented COO who is being groomed by the immensely popular CEO. Both know it's best if they can coexist amicably without forcing anyone to take sides.

For GPIB and LXI, the concept of hybrid systems is the key to peaceful coexistence and a graceful transition. The consortium recognizes that real-world systems will include many types of instruments—GPIB, PXI, VXI, and now LXI—for years to come. We're even formalizing the concept of hybrid systems in the next revision of the LXI standard.

Confidence precedes boldness, and doing the right things the right way builds confidence. The decision to leverage existing standards and then define how they should work together was the foundation. Ensuring that LXI can work side-by-side with its predecessor strengthens that foundation and our confidence.

The real confidence booster, though, has been the rapidly growing global interest in LXI. At every turn, positive reactions from people like you who build test systems have deepened our commitment to our bold message: LXI is *the* successor to GPIB. It's only a matter of time.