



# BETTER DATA DELIVERED

## How the IIoT is revolutionizing the manufacturing plant

BY KAY JENKINS

Ask any number of plant executives what their greatest pain point is and chances are ‘inefficiency’ will be a common response. Executives are expected to produce more with less, cutting out time-consuming practices while maintaining optimal customer service. The problem is this strategy often fails to factor in downtime and inefficiencies out of the crew’s control.

But what if we could transform the plant manager into a pseudo-psychic, addressing equipment failures days, or even weeks, before they interrupt operations?

To some extent, the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) has already made this possible by providing deeper access to critical data. But soon, the IIoT will deliver a level of data analysis that will radically change the way we approach plant operations. It’s no wonder the IIoT market is expected to reach more than

US\$900 billion by 2025, according to a 2017 Grand View Research study.

The answer to how IIoT will affect your plant lies in how you manage data. Take a closer look at what the IIoT means for your maintenance operations and, ultimately, your bottom line.

### *The data doesn’t lie*

Before the IIoT, maintenance looked backward instead of forward — responding to machinery errors after they happened. Data capture gave the maintenance team an idea of what went wrong, but this information was only available after the fact. Plants could be saddled with costly repairs on top of the revenue already sacrificed to downtime.

The IIoT has helped refocus maintenance priorities on prevention. Sensors located on critical machinery talk to the plant’s Enterprise Asset Management system through a Predictive Maintenance Module (PdM). These sensors learn what optimal

operation feels like, so as a critical part begins to malfunction, they can alert the crew while it is still functional. By isolating maintenance data from operational data, the PdM declutters information, helping the plant manager make a more informed decision on how to approach preventive maintenance.

The benefits of an IIoT-enhanced plant touch all corners of the operation. Your maintenance team can reduce the amount of time it spends identifying errors, which in turn increases productivity and may be able to repair parts rather than replace them, slashing the maintenance budget. Your operations staff doesn’t spend their workday waiting for an out-of-commission machine to come back online. Your management faces fewer roadblocks in the quest to meet ever-increasing customer expectations.

Much like how AI-enabled assistants have already simplified our everyday tasks, IIoT-enabled technology will help cut down on redundant processes and resource-consuming repairs. As IIoT-enabled devices become more affordable and pressure for greater efficiency rises, there is no better time to invest in a connected plant.

### *Where do I start?*

If you’re interested in implementing

## \$934B

Grand View Research predicts the IIoT market will be worth US\$933.62 billion by 2025, largely driven by growing demand and adoption of Cloud computing and the scalability of IPv6-3.4X 10<sup>38</sup> IP address.

## The benefits of an IIoT-enhanced plant touch all corners of the operation.

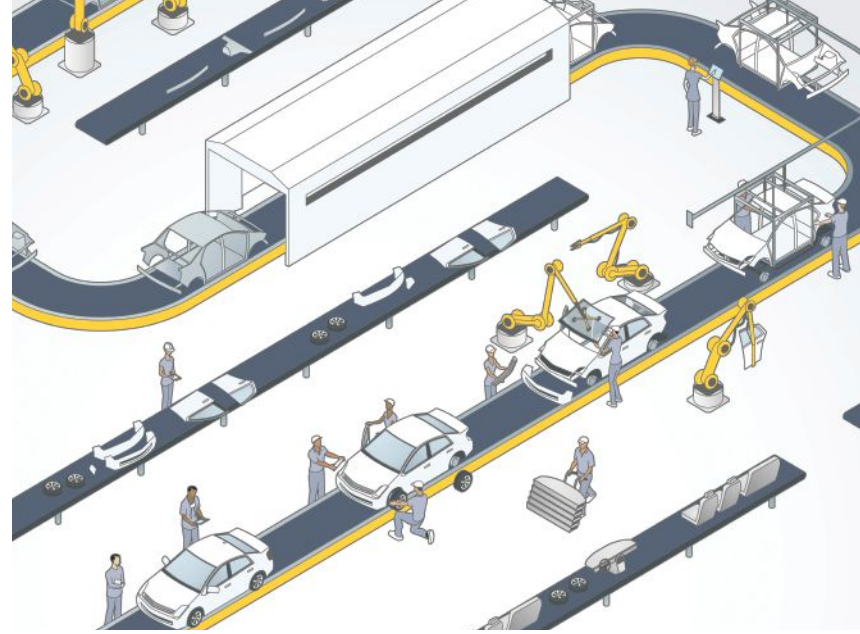
IIoT-enabled tech, you'll need to do some background work first. Consider these three steps to gain better data:

- Determine your pain points**  
 Spend a few days examining every plant process and observe the machinery in action and speak with its operators. Gathering this information helps you make a more informed decision during the buying process. You want to make sure your IIoT investment is right for your unique problem.
- Prioritize areas for IIoT implementation**  
 Create a roadmap for IIoT implementation and start with the pain points that need to be addressed immediately. Ensure your initial sensors are placed on machinery that malfunctions irregularly or require the most time to repair.
- Consider moving to the Cloud**  
 If you're looking to implement IIoT on a budget, maintaining advanced technology in-house will be cost-prohibitive. Whichever solution you choose to interpret your IIoT-enabled devices, Cloud-based Enterprise Asset Management systems are cheaper to implement and can turn around data analysis faster than onsite solutions.

### Investing in efficiency

It won't be long before IIoT is a plant standard—demands on production will be too great to function without it. The good news is IIoT is now prevalent enough that upgrading your plant is an affordable process. If you need to glean more information from your operational data, it's time to consider how IIoT-enabled devices can improve your processes. | **MA**

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