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Press release

Airbus is kept in good measure with help from Hexagon

The Airbus factory in Broughton, North Wales, has ordered a large co-ordinate measuring machine from Hexagons Italian subsidiary DEA. It will provide advanced dimensional inspection capabilities that will help keep pace with the production of wing spars for the current fleet of Airbus aircraft and components for the new Airbus A380, a 555-seater aircraft for the 21st Century.

The Machine, a Delta Gantry, currently has a longitudinal measuring stroke of 10.5 metres, a transverse measuring stroke of 3 metres, and a vertical stroke of 500mm. With an accuracy formula of microns $4 + 5L/1000$, it makes the machine one of the most accurate and repeatable machine of its kind. To further increase its capability for inspecting extremely long aircraft structural components, the team at Airbus are planning a future expansion of the machine's inspection envelope by extending its longitudinal stroke to a remarkable size of 20 metres. The Delta will be installed in the workshop to inspect close tolerance wing spars.

The machine is equipped with PC-DMIS geometric measuring software, an interactive graphics package that simplifies and streamlines the measuring programming for both the ordinary and the most exotic applications. PC-DMIS provides fast and precise data analysis, a fully configurable, intuitive graphic user interface, interactive report formatting and data handling, and graphic output capabilities. Exclusive CAD interface options provide a direct path from CAD data, to part programming, graphical simulations, and inspection results.

Airbus will accelerate the inspection programming by employing an off-line programming system, capable of generating part programs in standard DMIS formats directly from the CAD geometry. The ability of PC-DMIS to execute these programs, without translators, ensures high part program consistency and a superior operating efficiency. Inspection results can be uploaded to the off-line system by DMIS links for more detailed SPC data analysis.

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Hexagon is a multinational engineering group with the long-term ambition of positioning itself as number one or number two within its strategic sectors. The operation is divided into three business areas. The group's targets are to increase earnings per share after tax by at least 15 per cent p.a., and achieve a return on capital employed of more than 15 per cent over a business cycle.