Collect XL™

Interface Instruments Directly to Excel®

RS232
or
TCP/IP

LABTRONICS INC.

The Instrument Interfacing Experts

Collect XL is a software application that integrates tightly with Excel® to provide direct data collection from instruments with RS232 or TCP Ethernet ports.

Unlike older "wedge technology", Collect XL's advanced integration techniques take full advantage of Excel® to provide a seamless, easy-to-use solution. This eliminates the need to co-ordinate more than one application at the same time.

- Pre-configured instruments, in the Labtronics Instrument Library, eliminates the need to set up instruments

- Collect real-time data from multiple instruments at the same time

- Multi-tasking — data collection runs in the background while you use other Excel® workbooks or even other applications

- Send commands to instruments continually or at time intervals

- Simplify data collection by working with one integrated program instead of two or more separate applications.

The advanced, integrated technology of Collect XL makes it much easier to use than traditional "wedge software".

What is Collect XL?

Collect XL is a data collection application that sends instrument data directly into standard Excel® workbooks for further processing and reporting.

Starting Collect XL automatically launches an associated Excel® workbook that contains new menu items used to control instruments. The rest of Excel® is completely unaffected and can be used in the normal manner to enter data, draw graphs, run macros, create reports, etc. As data is received from the instruments, it is processed in the background and then formatted results are added to the correct cells in the workbook.

Labtronics introduced the first commercial RS232 data collection program in 1989 and has been improving the technology ever since.

Pre-Configured Instrument Library

The Labtronics Instrument Library is an integral component of Collect XL and contains over 400 pre-configured instrument interfaces. Connecting your instrument with your Excel template through Collect XL is done with just three simple steps:

1) Select the appropriate device from the library.

2) Identify the COM port being used.

3) Enter the Excel® spreadsheet cells that are to be used for the data.

The Labtronics Instrument Library is updated on a regular basis as new instruments become available. New versions of the Instrument Library are available for download from the Labtronics web site.

Instruments that are not already part of the Labtronics Instrument Library can be defined by the user and saved within Collect XL. Labtronics will gladly help with this process as part of our standard technical support service.

Collect XL is compatible with any instrument that produces data through an RS232 or TCP/IP Ethernet port. Data collection from RS422, RS485 and analog devices can also be supported in most situations. Contact Labtronics to discuss your specific requirements.

Using the Instrument Library, anyone can quickly set up an instrument interface.

Multiple Instruments

Collect XL has been designed to handle multiple instruments at the same time. Each instrument will have its' own control menus so that they can be controlled independently. Data from each instrument can be processed separately and sent to different cell locations within the same worksheet or different worksheets. Data can be collected from multiple instruments at the same time.

Multiple Methods are supported, meaning that several independent Excel® workbooks can be started, each with its' own set of instruments.

Working with multiple instruments is as easy as working with one. Starting a Collect XL Method automatically adds menus for each instrument. A single mouse click starts data collection from an instrument.

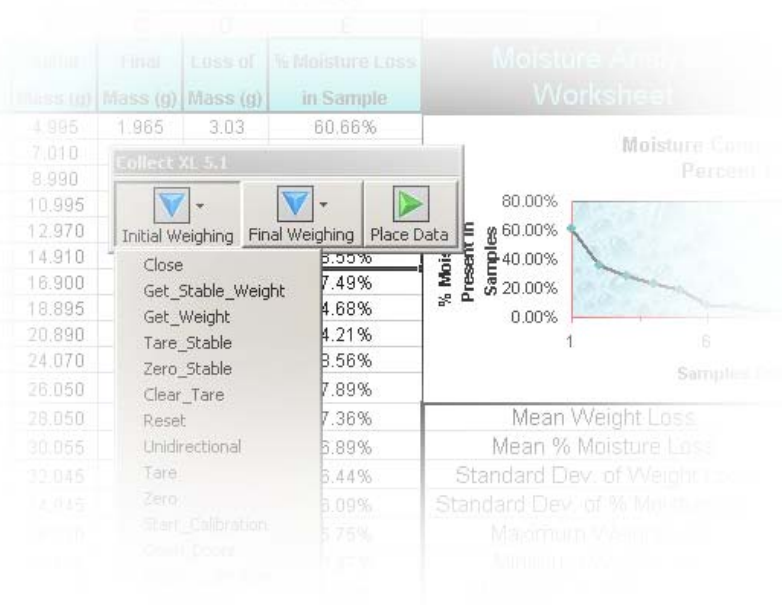*Combine data from several devices into one Excel*®
workbook.

Multi-tasking

Unlike hardware or software 'wedge-type' solutions, Collect XL does not require you to keep the mouse cursor on the correct cell location. The tight integration of Collect XL with Excel® allows you to use the computer to work in other Excel® workbooks or even other applications, without interfering with data collection. Data collection occurs in the background, independent of other computer activities.

Collect XL keeps track of the instruments and, when data is available, it is automatically processed (parsed) and placed into the cells without interfering with your other work. You can return to the active Excel® workbook at any time to review the data. Collected data will be added to Excel® in real time. Graphs in the workbook will be updated in real time as data is received.

Collect data in the background while working with other
applications.

What Happens at Run Time?

When you start Collect XL, it will ask you to select a pre-defined Method. Making the selection will automatically start Excel®, load the correct Excel® template and add an instrument control menu. Excel® is ready to be used in the normal manner to enter data, draw graphs, run macros, create reports, load files or control instruments.

Instrument control menus are added for each instrument that has been defined in the Method. Each instrument can have multiple menus, one for each command that is defined for the instrument. For example, a balance might have commands for Get Weight, Tare, Open Doors and Get Weight Every 2 Minutes. Any collected data will be added to Excel® in real time – you'll see data pop into cells as it happens.

The Excel® template is a standard spreadsheet that is created for each Method. It can contain formulas, macros, graphics, headings and instructions, in any format you like. The template makes it easy to control standard procedures, since it is loaded automatically for a method, and the user is then guided using the template.

With Collect XL, data collection and instrument control
are now part of your standard Excel® *environment.*

More than Just Data Collection

Collect XL includes many additional features:

- send commands to instruments on a continual basis, without operator intervention

- send commands at timed intervals

- add a date and time stamp to each reading

- process and parse complex data, i.e. multi-line data

- collect data without sending commands – easy to switch between bi-directional and uni-directional modes

- export and import methods – makes it easy to expand applications to additional workstations

- test and diagnostic module to help set up new instruments and methods

- view template setup during method creation

- use log file to record instrument control sessions

- supports protocols for XON/XOFF and RTS/CTS

- powerful data parser

Advanced Instrument Control

Collect XL is able to control instruments with manual commands and with timed commands. It is also able to use values in Excel® as variables inside instrument commands, making it easy for the user to dynamically change commands from inside the spreadsheet.

If your application requires a higher degree of automation and instrument control, then Collect Pro, an advanced version of Collect XL, may be the solution. Collect Pro converts Excel® into a powerful instrument control application. Contact Labtronics for more details.

If Collect XL meets your requirements today, it is comforting to know that an upgrade path to Collect Pro exists when you need it.

Technical Support

Labtronics provides all technical support directly to the end user. Technical support, which includes unlimited telephone assistance, is offered free of charge for one year with the purchase of every Labtronics product. For subsequent years, customers may subscribe to the Labtronics Annual Support Plan.

Professional Services

The Collect XL software is designed with user setup and ease of use in mind; however, Labtronics understands that not everyone has the time to set up and learn any new software no matter how easy it may be to configure and use.

Contact Labtronics about the services available to help bring your system on-line quickly through our expertise.

30-day Money Back Guarantee

Labtronics software products are provided with a 30-day evaluation guarantee. If within 30 days you are not completely satisfied with our software, you may return it to us for a full refund.

Applications and System Requirements

- Windows® NT 4 (minimum SR4), Windows® 2000 or Windows® XP Professional

- 64 MB RAM

- Pentium 133 MHz or higher processor

- 15 MB hard drive space for installation

- Microsoft® Excel® 97, Excel® 2000, Excel® XP (2002), Excel® 2003