VXIpc™ Embedded Controller for VxWorks

This document contains information to help you understand the components of your kit, determine where to start setting up your kit, and learn about the NI-VXI/VISA features.

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What Do You Have?

Your kit contains hardware, software, and documentation. You may also have ordered some optional equipment or software.

Hardware

Your hardware includes either the VXIpc 800 Series or the VXIpc 700 Series controller, which you install in your VXI mainframe. You also receive the following accessories:

• 8 in. serial conversion cable (available for the VXIpc 800 Series only)
• Electromagnetic emissions kit
• AT-PS/2 cable

Software

Your VXIpc kit contains the following software components:

• Host-Side Software for VXIpc for VxWorks (Microsoft Windows NT/98 Installation)
• Target-Side Software for VXIpc for VxWorks

For your convenience, NI-VXI/VISA, NI-488 and a VxWorks boot ROM loader (bootrom.sys) are already installed on the hard drive of your VXIpc embedded controller.

Printed Documentation

Aside from this document, your kit contains the following printed manuals:

• *Getting Started with Your VXIpc Controller for VxWorks* contains an overview of the VXIpc hardware and the NI-VXI software, guides you through setting up your kit, and helps you get started with application development. You can also use this manual as a reference for the hardware and software default settings, to find the answers for commonly asked questions, and for information on reinstalling the software, if necessary.

• The *VXIpc 870 Series User Manual* (in VXIpc 870 kits), the *VXIpc 800 Series User Manual* (in VXIpc 800 kits), or the *VXIpc 700 Series User Manual* (in VXIpc 700 kits) contains information on configuring and installing your VXIpc controller. You may not need this manual if you are performing a simple hardware installation that uses the standard default settings. However, you should keep this manual in case you decide to try a different switch or jumper setting at a later time. The user manual also contains information on BIOS, the front panel and connectors, the LEDs, and system resources.
Online Documentation

Your kit includes links to online manuals that are not in printed form, but in electronic form: Adobe Acrobat portable document format (PDF) files. This online documentation is installed by the Host-Side Software for VXIpc for VxWorks setup software and is intended for use on the Microsoft Windows NT/98/95 operating systems. You can view these manuals online, navigate through them, and print them from your computer using the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

The National Instruments manuals in PDF format are as follows:

- The **NI-VXI User Manual** describes the features and concepts of the NI-VXI software and explains how to use NI-VXI in your application.
- The **NI-VXI Programmer Reference Manual** describes in detail the VXI/VME function calls in the C/C++ and BASIC languages.
- The **NI-VXI Text Utilities Reference Manual** describes in detail the interactive text utilities for the NI-VXI software.
- The **NI-VISA User Manual** describes how to program using VISA.
- The **NI-VISA Programmer Reference Manual** describes in detail the attributes, events, and operations you use in NI-VISA.
- The **GPIB Reference Manual for VXIpc Embedded Controllers and VxWorks** contains information about using NI-488 on your VXIpc controller with the VxWorks operating system.

To access these manuals, the NI-VXI and NI-VISA function references, and the ReadMe files, follow the links in the appropriate HTML file in your Board Support Package (BSP). The files you use to access the online manuals are manuals-vxi.html, manuals-visa.html, and manuals-gpib.html. See Step 3 in the Where Do You Start? section for more information on the BSP.

Where Do You Start?

1. Compare your kit contents with the description in the preceding What Do You Have? section. Contact National Instruments regarding any discrepancies.
2. VxWorks uses a target and host machine. If you are unfamiliar with this concept, refer to the Developing for VxWorks section in Chapter 1, Introduction, of Getting Started with Your VXIpc Controller for VxWorks (hereafter referred to as your getting started manual).
3. The following steps assume that Tornado, the VxWorks host-side development environment, is already installed on your host computer. Run the Setup program from the Host-Side Software for VXIpc for
VxWorks installation disk to install the software. This disk is intended for Windows NT/98 *host* machines. For a first time installation, we recommend that you install all of the software, which contains the VxWorks Board Support Package (BSP), the VXI/VME and GPIB driver component software, NI-VISA support for VxWorks, online help, examples, and header files for NI-VXI, NI-VISA, and NI-488.

**Note** The current version of the VXIpc BSP requires Tornado II. If you have an older version of Tornado, contact Wind River for an upgrade.

4. Refer to the *Using the VXIpc Board Support Package to Create the VxWorks Operating System* section in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of your getting started manual. This section contains information about building the VxWorks operating system, which will run on the VXIpc, using the VXIpc Board Support Package (BSP). This section also contains information about configuring the VXIpc BSP.

5. On the *target* side, your VXIpc should have the NI-VXI, NI-VISA, and NI-488 software already installed, along with a working `bootrom.sys` file to help you get started.
   a. If you need to reinstall this software for any reason, use the disks labeled *Target-Side Software for VXIpc for VxWorks*. You can also refer to the *Reinstalling the NI-VXI Software* section in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of your getting started manual.
   b. A working `bootrom.sys` is included on the target-side software disks, should it become necessary to reinstall that component.

6. Most VXI/VME features on the VXIpc controller are configurable through software. Use the vxitedit configuration utility in the NI-VXI software if you want to change any of the options from their default settings. Run Resman to set up your VXI system and victext to verify the system configuration.

7. After you finish setting up your system, refer to the following documents to learn how to use VXI/VME or GPIB.
   a. Refer to Chapter 4, *Developing Your Application*, in your getting started manual to learn how to use your VXI/VME system and ensure it is operating properly.
   b. Refer to Chapter 2, *Developing Your Application with the VxWorks Drivers*, in the *GPIB Reference Manual for VXIpc Embedded Controllers and VxWorks* to learn how to use the
VxWorks GPIB drivers and how to develop a GPIB application using the NI-488 API.

c. Refer to Chapter 3, *VISA Overview*, in the *NI-VISA User Manual* for information about programming with VISA. Use the Acrobat Reader to view this manual online.

8. Please refer to the README.TXT files for important information that may affect your application program, including known issues and software corrections with this release and additional information relevant to API development.

You can access the README.TXT files where you installed the software for VxWorks on your host machine. There are separate README files for several of the components.

You can also reference the National Instruments sites ni.com or ftp.ni.com for driver updates, examples, and product news.

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**What Is NI-VXI?**

The NI-VXI system-level software is the driver that controls your VXIpc and VXI/VME system. NI-VXI includes a Resource Manager, an interactive configuration program, libraries of software routines for test and measurement programming, and an interactive control program. You can use this software to seamlessly program multiple-mainframe configurations and ensure software compatibility across a variety of controller platforms.

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**What Is NI-VISA?**

VISA is a standard I/O Application Programming Interface (API) for instrumentation programming. In VxWorks, VISA by itself does not provide any instrumentation programming functionality. VISA is a high-level API that calls into system-level drivers. As an example, the NI-VISA implementation of VISA uses the NI-VXI system-level driver for National Instruments VXI controllers.

In its full implementation, VISA can control VXI, PXI, GPIB, TCP/IP, or Serial instruments, making the appropriate driver calls depending on the type of instrument being used. VISA uses the same operations to communicate with instruments regardless of the interface type. For example, the VISA command to write an ASCII string to a message-based instrument is the same whether the instrument is Serial, GPIB, or VXI. As a result, VISA gives you interface independence. This makes it easier to switch bus interfaces and means that users who must program instruments for multiple interfaces need learn only one API. This release of NI-VISA
for VxWorks provides the VXI portion of the API, and is compatible with
the VXI portions of VISA programs written for other platforms.

Another advantage of VISA is that it is an object-oriented API that will
easily adapt to new instrumentation interfaces as they evolve, making
application migration to the new interfaces easy.

Because VISA is the industry standard for developing instrument drivers,
most instrument drivers currently written by National Instruments use
VISA and therefore support VxWorks, Windows NT/9x, Solaris, HP-UX,
and Macintosh, if the system-level drivers are available for that platform.

**NI-VXI/VISA Release Notes**

This section describes the new utilities and features in this release of
NI-VXI/VISA for VxWorks.

**Supported Application Development Environments**

This release of NI-VXI/VISA for VxWorks supports the Tornado gcc
compiler version 2.7. Other Application Development Environments
(ADEs) or a later version of this ADE may also work.

**The NI-VXI Directory**

The *nivxi* directory on your VXIpc hard drive contains important files
that describe the configuration of your hardware and software. By default,
the library searches for these files in the directory `/ide0/nivxi`, which
corresponds to `C:\NIVXI` in MS-DOS and means that the *nivxi* directory
must be at the root level of the hard drive. If, for some reason, you must
move or rename the directory, use the environmental variable `NIVXIPATH`
to inform the library of the new location. The VxWorks method for setting
an environment variable uses the `putenv("variableName=value")`
function. For example, to instruct the library to search for the NI-VXI files
in a subdirectory of your NI-VXI directory, your function syntax would be
`putenv("NIVXIPATH=/ide0/nivxi/vxworks")`.

**The VXIPnP Directory**

The *vxipnp* directory on your VXIpc hard drive, like the *nivxi* directory,
contains important information used by NI-VISA. If the files in that
location (`/ide0/vxipnp`) are not available, VISA uses its default
configuration options.
Remote Controllers

This section applies to multiframe systems where you use interrupts, triggers, or utility bus signals.

Remote controllers, when configured to detect asynchronous events such as a VXI interrupt or VXI trigger, need to inform the local controller that such an asynchronous event has occurred. The remote controllers report these events back to the local controller via a VXI IRQ line. This IRQ line is called the system IRQ line. You can use vxitedit to select which VXI interrupt line the remote controller uses to report remote events to the local controller. Map the system IRQ line back to the local controller to receive remote controller interrupts. The Resource Manager performs this mapping automatically in the parent-side VXI-MXI-2 controllers, but not in other mainframe extenders. You can map interrupts through vxitedit, or with the MapVXIInt() function, which is described in the NI-VXI online help or the NI-VXI Programmer Reference Manual.

The system IRQ line is treated differently than other IRQ lines used by NI-VXI:

- The Resource Manager (Logical Address 0) always acknowledges the system IRQ line.
- You cannot disable the system IRQ line on the Resource Manager. Calling DisableVXIint() on the system IRQ line does not disable it.
- Devices other than remote controllers can also interrupt on the system IRQ line, provided the device at Logical Address 0 is the handler for the interrupt.
- National Instruments recommends that you do not route the system IRQ line to the signal queue. Because the system IRQ line cannot be disabled, this routing could lose interrupts.

Passing the value –1 as the logical address of a controller in NI-VXI causes NI-VXI to select the local controller. Notice that on external controllers such as the PCI-MXI-2, –1 refers to the first remote controller in your system. This is to maintain compatibility with older systems where the external controller needed an extender to assert and receive interrupts.

Enhancements to the NI-VXI Software

The following sections describe the additional options beyond what is documented in the NI-VXI User Manual and the NI-VXI Programmer Reference Manual.
Compatibility
NI-VXI applications that follow the guidelines documented in the
*NI-VXI User Manual* will work with NI-VXI for the VXIpc embedded
collectors with VxWorks.

High-Level VXIbus Access Functions
For best performance, keep the following in mind when using *VXImove()*:

- Make sure your buffers are 32-bit aligned.
- Transfer 32-bit data whenever possible.
- Using VXI block access privileges significantly improves performance
to devices that can accept block transfers.

Interrupts in NI-VXI for VxWorks
In order to provide real-time performance, NI-VXI event handlers in
VxWorks behave differently than those in other operating systems. When
you install a handler for a VXI event such as an interrupt, trigger, or signal
and the appropriate event occurs, your code will be executed by the
interrupt service routine (ISR). The context for the ISR is independent
of any task and has certain restrictions regarding what operating system
functions may be used, since for the duration of the ISR no normal task
will execute. For example, you may not attempt to acquire a semaphore
(semTake) in the ISR. Refer to your VxWorks reference manuals for details
on functions which may not be executed in the ISR. If your application
requires a function with this restriction, or performs other complex or
time-consuming operations, you may want to consider using a signal or
a semaphore to alert a “worker” task which will respond to the interrupt
outside of the ISR. The worker task can be given high priority, if needed,
to ensure optimal performance.

NI-VISA for VxWorks
NI-VISA Version 1.3 for VxWorks currently supports only the VXI
interface. Version numbers of NI-VISA higher than 1.3 may support
Serial and other interfaces.