

## Hello, Facility Manager? This is Circuit Breaker No. 4

Look around and it's not difficult to see the incredible impact the Internet of Things is having on our daily lives. From fitness monitors to home thermostats controlled by a smart phone, more and more of our devices are now perpetually connected.

This connectivity provides us with access to a seemingly infinite amount of information. We can get data on not only the things that our devices measure, like our heart rate or the temperature of a room, but also detailed information on the health and performance of the device itself.

My FitBit, for example, sends me an email when its battery needs charging. That way, I don't miss the logging of a single step I take.

There is a parallel trend that is taking place in today's technologically-advanced buildings, where a facility manager can now get a plethora of information about the status of the facility's electrical distribution equipment. Are you interested in trends in your building's energy use? What about the status of circuit breakers and how far along they are in their life expectancy? Want to know when a circuit breaker is overloaded or worse yet, has tripped?

As buildings become increasingly connected, all of this information—and more—is readily available with the convenience of an e-mail or a notification on a smart phone. You no longer have to learn on a Monday that part of your facility's power shut down over the weekend while you were out on the golf course. Now you have to call your electrician after the fact, putting you even further behind in your work week.

Getting a message that says something just happened is going to make your job a whole lot easier. When the information is critical, it is likely even worth interrupting your golf game. I can already hear the grumbles and pushback from some facility managers, who will say: "I don't want my phone chirping incessantly, updating me every time the system takes a temperature reading."

I couldn't agree with them more. The powerful thing about today's tracking of your power distribution data is that you can select what types of information and alarms you want to get and when you want to get them.

For example, most managers probably want to know immediately about a major power outage or a critical circuit breaker overload situation.

But an update that tells you a particular circuit breaker is 50% into its lifespan is not something you want waking you up in the middle of the night. To allow facility managers to pick and choose, today's alarm setup pages allow users to select only the notifications they want to receive and even customize the text.

Text can be declarative and to the point:

*To: Facility Manager:*

*“Building C, 3rd Floor Electrical Room, Breaker EC7 has tripped.”*

Or it can strike a more personal tone:

*Hi Joe:*

*“This is breaker EC7 and I have just tripped.”*

In addition, engineers are constantly working to improve the user interfaces for displaying data. A prototype of a smart phone app I recently saw uses an image of dials, each with a range between zero and ten to indicate the relative health of a circuit breaker. As the device gets closer to a critical state, more of the dial turns to red. It serves as a quick visual check of breaker status without the need to plow through a table of data or check the display on the front of the breaker.

This kind of easy access to information is helping facility managers today make better and smarter decisions about their operations, which ultimately results in greater competitiveness. Make sure you're not lagging behind in leverage the Internet of Things to gain insight into your electrical distribution.

For information on Schneider Electric's Smart Systems to manage your electrical distribution equipment, please visit Schneider Electric's product page. Also check out Schneider Electric's Facility Hero, a free smart phone log book app for improving your maintenance team's efficiency and sharing information with a larger community of experts.