

Short Circuit

The monthly newsletter for Intellect's electronics members

intellect

May 2008

Intellect and innovation in electronics: Product Design Forum

Some members will recall that in July 2007, Intellect held a scoping meeting to determine interest in a new group: The Product Design Forum. This was intended as a replacement and expansion of the Electronics Design and Innovation Group (EDIG) formerly chaired by Chris McArdle from Innotec.

As we all know, product design is critical for the success of any technology business. Design and engineering managers are constantly looking for new ideas and inspiration. The aim of the forum is to create a community of design management experts to share best design practices and catch up with the best enabling technologies available in the market. In the wider context of the industry, we know that innovative and successful design is critical to the future of the UK electronics industry, especially given the fact that high-volume manufacture has largely left these shores.

Last year's scoping meeting showed us that there is a good deal of interest in this group

on the part of members. But as with any Intellect group, we need to identify a chair who would be prepared to support Intellect in moving the work programme of the group forward.



So far, the approaches we have made to various individuals have not borne fruit, so we would like to get the Intellect design community together again so that interested parties can step forward.

You will receive a separate invitation to this meeting, which will be in late August/early September. If you would like to get your foot in the door, and work with us on putting together a provisional work programme, please contact Henry Parker, T 020 7331 2019 E henry.parker@intellectuk.org

National Electronics Week and Intellect conclude relationship

As we noted in the last issue of Short Circuit, June sees the inaugural "National Electronics Week" (NEW). Now that Nepcon is no more, NEW is really the only event that brings together the UK electronics community together on a national scale.

Intellect will be assisting with raising awareness of the event. We will also have our own stand at the show and, in partnership with the UK Electronics Alliance, will be presenting a seminar on the morning of the 19 June, that will explain how electronics can take best advantage of the government's R&D tax credits scheme.

Intellect's presence at NEW reflects our focus on providing direct support for, and representation of, companies active in the electronics sector, as well as highlighting our partnerships with key 'umbrella' organisations, both publicly and privately funded, that work with the UK

electronics sector as a whole. We are pleased to support an event that, for the first time in many years, brings together the full breadth of the UK electronics sector under one roof.

While there is no doubt that our industry faces continuing threats from increased offshore competition, we hope that NEW will help to reinforce the reality that electronics is still a vibrant, innovative and, above all, increasingly successful element of the UK economy as a whole. NEW will help greatly in reinforcing this message and we look forward to a positive relationship going forward.

www.nationalelectronicsweek.co.uk



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Fortnightly industry update on all aspects of the technology industry

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Employment law changes and free HR services

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Regular update on Intellect's training courses

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Monthly newsletter for Intellect's electronic members

Switched On

Monthly overview of all the big stories from the digital communications and consumer electronics markets

Whitehall Watch

Fortnightly public affairs digest

Where next with WEEE?

Compliance with the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) Directive is something that the whole electronics sector has had to come to terms with recently. Many Intellect members have gone to great lengths to ensure compliance, and show that really, the technology sector is part of the solution to environmental problems, rather than just a source of them. The UK currently has nearly double the amount of WEEE compliance schemes of any other EU member state, which shows that we are ahead of the game when it comes to recycling.

The European Commission has now decided that it is time to revise WEEE. Intellect, along with other trade associations, recently received a briefing from the European Commission Environment Directorate-General, which detailed what is on the horizon.

A consultation document, with a response deadline of 05 June, has been launched which outlines how the Commission is reviewing the scope of the WEEE Directive, seeking to clarify the product categories that WEEE falls into, as well as examining the possible expansion of the Directive to include other electrical and electronic products.

Interestingly, the Commission appears to have judged that because most states, including the UK are meeting the agreed targets of WEEE collection per year, the targets may need to be revised.

Producer responsibility provisions will also be looked at, with the consultation stating that the varied approach from country to country means that "there is evidence that this flexibility leads to variable (and hence no optimal) contribution to the improvement of the

environmental performance of operators and systems."



Finally, it asks interested parties to consider options for improving the treatment of WEEE, including the potential for the introduction of Europe-wide treatment standards.

Timelines for these changes are always difficult to predict, but if these revisions follow form, we would expect to see the results of the a consultation by the end of the year and some more substantive proposals for new legislation at the beginning of next.

Seven industry leaders join revamped Electronics Leadership Council

The Electronics Leadership Council (ELC) has announced the second phase of its development as an industry leadership body. Seven new members have joined the Council – all of them chairmen or CEOs of major UK electronics companies.

In its restructured form, the ELC will assume a prominent advisory role to the government on the UK electronics industry, and it has already held a successful meeting with Baroness Shriti Vadera, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Competitiveness. The new ELC will meet three or four times a year, with an invited government minister in attendance. The Council will concern itself with all the key issues that impact

on the electronics industry, including skills, innovation, investment and government procurement. It will monitor progress against an agreed strategy plan that will be published on the new ELC website.

ELC Chairman Harry Tee said, "Too often we hear about electronics being an enabling technology for other sectors and not an industry in itself. The ELC sets out to dispel this myth. Electronics is not merely an enabler but is absolutely core to many successful UK engineering businesses, whether they be defined as defence, aerospace, transport or automotive. All sub-sectors will be represented on the new Council, including micro-electronics, the basic

building block of the industry, and – given the centrality of innovation and enter-



prise to the national strategy – venture capital as well. The new ELC has a vital role in providing focused and high-profile sector leadership, and we are looking forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead."

www.electronicleadershipcouncil.org

The Institute of Circuit Technology 2008 annual symposium

The Institute of Circuit Technology is pleased to announce their 34th Annual Symposium on 03 June 2008. The Symposium is being held at The Tweed Horizons Conference Centre at Newtown St Boswells in the Scottish Borders.

The theme this year will be 'Design for Manufacture' with seven papers from leading authorities in this prime technology.

There will also be a Table Top Exhibition and time for socialising and networking.

For more information, contact **Bill Wilkie**, Technical Director, Institute of Circuit Technology
T 01573 226131
E bill.wilkie@InstCt.org

Plexus secure thermal imaging production deal

Plexus has secured a contract to become a global volume manufacturing partner for Irisys.

The multi-million pound contract is initially for the manufacture of the company's thermal imagers and is expected to develop to include people counting systems later this year.

The systems covered by the new contract have been through Plexus' thorough DfX (design for excellence) and design for test evaluation, which includes the development of bespoke test solutions.

As a result Irisys has benefited from a reduction in the overall production costs for the systems.

"As Irisys grows its business and penetrates global markets the company needs an EMS partner that can support us through our growth cycle. Plexus has been able to meet this aim and at the same time provide global manufacturing in our target regions," commented John Smith, Operations Director at Irisys.

Willie Mackinnon, Plexus UK Managing Director, at Plexus continued, "Our

relationship with Irisys has been extremely rewarding, developing from manufacturing to incorporate DfX, DFT and our design services. We are now looking forward to rolling out new products as Irisys' business develops globally."

www.plexus.com



Orbotech introduces new brand identity and website

Orbotech Ltd has introduced a new brand identity worldwide to further signify the company's continued evolution and success as the vendor of choice in multiple industries worldwide since its inception 27 years ago.

A new website has been designed to communicate the company's brand message and to be a key information resource for all Orbotech stakeholders.

"The value of our brand is a critical success factor in our business. We are updating it to better reflect Orbotech's

progress and growth over the years, including; the introduction of core technologies to new markets, new technologies for our main markets, and our current expansion from yield management into production areas," said Rani Cohen, chief executive officer, at Orbotech Ltd.

Orbotech's brand promise is captured in its new corporate slogan "Be Sure", which projects the company's unique value proposition.

An updated company logo has also been unveiled which is more contemporary in style, yet still conveys Orbotech's long-standing history. A new monochromatic, minimalist design for all materials is centered around a single blue colour which interprets the "Be Sure" message visually by reflecting clarity, consistency and quality.

www.orbotech.com

Setting standards for sustainable design

Want to have your say on the future direction of sustainable design standards? Know which standards can help your products meet potential future regulations on ecodesign?

Attend this free one day BSI British Standards Forum in London on 10 June to learn how to manage sustainable design more effectively, and to have your say in shaping the direction the UK should take in regard to future standardisation in sustainable design.

There is a growing focus on sustainable design within the design community and more widely amongst manufacturers and service providers. New directives and regulations are currently being implemented in the UK which will place specific eco-design obligations on designers across the product lifecycle. Another significant driver is the potential cost savings for manufacturers – sustainable product design can lower costs across the whole manufacturing process.



Read more and request your invitation at www.bsigroup.com/sustainabledesign

**Date for your diary... Consumer Electronics Conference 2008
Tomorrow's Technology, Thursday 03 July 2008**

Prism takes collaborative approach to PCB design

Prism Electronics Ltd has helped GSI Group Ltd to break into the growing fibre laser products market by helping to design and manufacture a number of printed circuit boards that are central to GSI's new fibre laser.

Instead of using mirrors, laser rods and optical surfaces, fibre lasers are made from fibre devices. One significant advantage of this is that there is no need for alignment, adjustment or cleaning of optical surfaces once the laser has been built, making the device easier to use and maintain in operation.

Peter Bennett, GSI's Global sourcing manager, said, "The development approach has been a collaborative one and we are delighted with the amount of effort that Prism has put into the

project."

Development work first began on these laser systems almost two years ago. GSI selected Prism not only because it had the technical expertise to produce the board but also because it could support GSI through the whole production process, adopting a collaborative, iterative approach throughout the process.

Fibre lasers are used in a number of industrial applications including aerospace, automotive and medical devices. Processes include cutting, drilling, welding and marking, where a high degree of precision is required.

Peter Bennett added, "This current project is the first step on a

programme of development of a family of products based on the same technology. It has proved to be a lengthy process but it is clearly important that we get the technology right now, to provide a firm foundation for any future development."

He continued, "Our experience to date with Prism makes them the natural choice for any such developments and we look forward to working with them to forge a mutually beneficial long-term business relationship."

www.prism-electronics.com



Plextek demos innovative convoy communication concept for MoD

Plextek Limited has successfully demonstrated an innovative low power, low cost wireless convoy communications prototype to key decision makers at the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The prototype is the culmination of an 8 month research effort following the £295,000 contract Plextek won in July 2007 - the first in the MoD's "Competition of Ideas" (CoI) scheme. The robust prototype has been designed to bridge the current gap between electronic technology available to commercial vehicle operators and the

technology used by military convoy operators. It enables real time situational awareness including vehicle position data, route planning and vehicle/cargo status and allows military users to evaluate the benefits of low cost, rapid insertion of commercial technologies into their existing vehicle fleets.

In developing the prototype Plextek has drawn on the company's extensive RF networking expertise by using Ultra Narrow Band (UNB) technology to create a low power, low cost RF based ad-hoc network operation. The system's inherent low probability of intercept and

detection is extremely desirable in the military context. Whilst offering each driver useful

navigational and situational data as well as inter-vehicle communications at a very low cost, it also enables headquarters to receive important data on vehicle position and cargo status in real time.

www.plextek.com



BAE Systems awarded £24 million torpedo extension contract

Spearfish is a submarine launched heavy-weight torpedo for use against both surface and submarine targets and therefore provides the primary offensive and defensive armament of the Royal Navy Submarine fleet. STEP is a one year extension to the existing three year Spearfish In Service Support (ISS) contract and commenced on the 01 April 2008. The contract comprises the maintenance of the warshot and exercise torpedoes to the Royal Navy fleet and the provision of design authority and repair services.

The MoD is currently considering the long-term support options for its future torpedo capability, one of which is a long-term partnering arrangement with BAE Systems. A decision is expected by March 2009, and if pursued this long-term contract (for 10 years or more) would provide a more coherent and holistic arrangement for managing Spearfish heavyweight and Sting Ray light-weight torpedo assets throughout the life of the programmes whilst retaining sovereign skills in the most cost effective manner.

Paul Laity, Director, Naval Programmes, BAE Systems Integrated Systems Technologies said; "This contract extension is evidence of our commitment to deliver continued value to the Royal Navy and will ensure the Royal Navy has the best capability available throughout the life of the programmes."

www.baesystems.com

GSPK Circuits joins the TCL Group

GSPK Ltd and the TCL Group are pleased to announce the sale of GSPK Circuits Ltd to the TCL Group; TCL having acquired the majority shareholding in the company.

This unprecedented move now strengthens the companies united overall position in the marketplace; making them one of the top three PCB suppliers in the UK.

This acquisition compliments the existing PCB capabilities of the TCL group; volume Far East supply through Daleba Electronics Ltd, and thermal circuit manufacturing through DK Thermal Ltd. The development of the GSPK/TCL relationship over the past few months has served to provide an excellent fit and job security in what is a very difficult marketplace.



Graham Keddie concludes, "This is an historic day for me and I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone well for the future."

www.gspkcircuits.ltd.uk

News in brief

Manufacturers weigh pros and cons of going to China

Increasing competition and shareholder pressure for greater profitability has led many UK OEMs over recent years to outsource production to places like Eastern Europe or China. Some reports suggest by next year 85% of the European EMS activity will be located in the eastern half of the continent.

Source: [Electronics Weekly](#)

GVL UK Ltd sales appointment

Global-Ventec Laminates UK Ltd is pleased to announce the appointment of Norman Fergusson as UK Sales Manager. Norman brings 35 years experience in the PCB industry as both PCB manufacturer and supplier and joins GVL UK Ltd at a time of rapid growth.

Source: [GVL UK Ltd](#)

Bournemouth to be UK's first Fibrecity

The race to become the UK's first 'Fibrecity' has been won by the seaside resort of Bournemouth. H2O Networks says work will begin to hook up every house and business in Bournemouth in the next six months - enabling speeds of up to 100Mbps.

Source: [Silicon.com](#)

Cirflex undertakes market review for CIT

Cirflex has been appointed by CIT (Conductive Inkjet Technologies) to undertake an initial market review for their contract manufacturing service. CIT's technology is based upon inkjet printing of a catalytic ink onto which copper can be electroless plated.

Source: [Cirflex Technology](#)

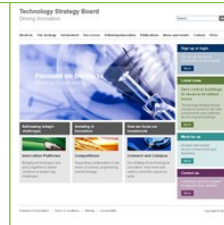
Technology Strategy Board launches new website

The Technology Strategy Board has launched its new website.

The Technology Strategy Board's role is to stimulate technology-enabled innovation in the areas which offer the greatest scope for boosting UK growth and productivity. By promoting supporting and investing in technology research, development and commercialisation, they help spread knowledge and bring people together to solve problems or make new advances.

The Board advises government on how to remove barriers to innovation and accelerate the exploitation of new technologies. The Board also works in areas where there is a clear potential business benefit, helping today's emerging technologies become the growth sectors of tomorrow.

The website contains secure information about the progress and management of live projects under the Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D)



programme of work. These pages provide complete information and tools and a wide range of information on covering competitions, the application process, progress of applications and successful projects.

www.innovateuk.org

BS 7000 Series: Design management systems

Research has revealed that organisations that evolve a framework for long-term innovation react faster to threats or surprises, are more likely to take effective action and are better at sustaining the momentum of change.

In light of this, BSI British Standards has revised the BS 7000 series of standards:

- ▶ BS 7000-1:2008 Design management systems. Guide to managing innovation.

- ▶ BS 7000-2:2008 Design management systems. Guide to managing the design of manufactured products.
- ▶ BS 7000-10:2008 Design management systems. Vocabulary of terms used in design management.

Read more about the standards at: www.bsigroup.com/designmanagement

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Editor: Sarah Voller
E: sarah.voller@intellectuk.org

Intellect
Russell Square House
10-12 Russell Square
London
WC1B 5EE

T: 020 7331 2041
F: 020 7331 2040
W: www.intellectuk.org

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If you are interested in sponsoring a future edition of **Short Circuit** or have any relevant industry news that you would like to be considered for inclusion in forthcoming editions, please contact Sarah Voller on T 020 7331 2041 or E sarah.voller@intellectuk.org

Editorial should be submitted no later than the 07 of each edition month.

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R&D tax credits for the electronics industry

Date: 02 June 2008
Time: 09:30-16:45
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EE



This course is for finance and development managers/directors from electronics companies of any size. In order to gain maximum benefit from the course, ideally both functions should be represented.

The government, serious about increasing R&D in the UK, has set ambitious targets to ensure more companies are able to undertake R&D activities.

From April 2008, the large company credit will increase from 125% to 130% and the available credit to small and medium-sized firms will rise from 150% to 175%.

Take advantage of this by attending this one day course where Intellect, with the help of the 'big four accountants' (Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PwC) will explain how you can get the most out of R&D tax credits for your company.

Cost: Intellect members £50+VAT
Contact Samantha Baglioni
T 020 7331 2006
E sam.baglioni@intellectuk.org

An Evening with an IT Giant

Date: 02 June 2008
Time: 17:30-20:00
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EE



The second in a series of four, the ICON IT Giants Series presents a unique bite-sized session where you will be audience to a top journalist interviewing Dr Mike Lynch OBE, managing director of Autonomy.

Dr Mike Lynch OBE founded Autonomy Corporation plc in 1996 based on his research at Cambridge University and rapidly

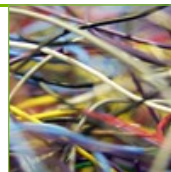
established the company's reputation as a world-leading provider of infrastructure software for unstructured information and meaning-based technologies.

An entertaining format, the questions asked are designed to give thought provoking insight into the strategy and business decisions that have made Autonomy a leader in their field.

Cost: Intellect members £75+VAT
Non-members £95+VAT
Contact Tammy Greeno
T 020 7331 2037
E tammy.greeno@intellectuk.org

Electronic Manufacturing Services Association

Date: 10 June 2008
Time: 12:30-16:00
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EE



Guest Speaker Peter Brent is a consultant for Reed Electronic Research (RER) based in Wantage, Oxfordshire.

Peter has twenty-five years experience in sales and marketing for electronics material manufacturers working with EMS providers.

In 2007 Peter conducted in-depth research into the EMS sector, producing 'The European Electronic Manufacturing Service 2006-2011' report, with regular updates conducted to keep projections current. The report covers

the strategic issues facing the European electronics industry, analysing the rapidly evolving market, and presenting detailing profiles of major EMS companies.

With an excellent understanding of the issues affecting businesses within the EMS field, we greatly look forward to Peter's contribution to this EMSA meeting.

A light lunch will be served during the meeting.

Cost: Free of charge to Intellect members only
Contact Henry Parker
T 020 7331 2039
E henry.parker@intellectuk.org