

Short Circuit

The monthly newsletter for Intellect's electronics members

intellect
REPRESENTING THE UK TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

September 2008

How do I speak to a buyer these days?

The answer, increasingly, is by keeping in touch with what's going on at Intellect.

The evening of Thursday 16 October sees the second in our series of electronics manufacturing receptions, which feature presentations from a range of key decision makers at OEMs in the manner in which they procure components and manufacturing services, as well as details of upcoming contracts and projects.

By attending, you'll steal a march on your competitors and gain important insights into how best to develop your business to meet their needs. The upcoming reception will feature Neil Rodgers, Chief Procurement Officer for British Telecom, who will present on the way in which BT selects suppliers. Neil oversees procurement for the entire BT Group, which had a turnover of £17bn last

year, a great contact to have.

He will be joined by Jaynie Huish, Head of Commercial, Subcontract & Partnering at EADS Defence & Security and a key decision maker on a range of contacts won by them.

If you want access to the really juicy projects, and the long term revenue that will bring to your company, we urge you to come along.

For further information and to reserve your place please contact
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A home for UK technology design

Many commentators dwell on the fact that large elements of the UK electronics sector have departed these shores. What is often not noted is that, according to government figures, the UK is still home to over 40% of Europe's independent electronic design community - by turnover and number of design houses.

Intellect has previously carried out work in this area. Formed in 2007, the Product Design Forum focuses on formulating best practice in technology product design as well as the discussion of the relative benefits of emerging enabling technologies. The Product Design Forum was established in recognition of the fact that product and system design is critical for the success of any technology related business, and that the future of the UK technology sector depends, to a large extent, on the successful development and exploitation of intellectual property.

The next meeting features a range of speakers, all of whom have real expertise in different aspects of this diverse field. Clive Grinyer, former head of design for Samsung and Orange, will outline his views of the best means of integrating the needs of users at

the earliest stages of the design process. He will be joined by Chris Turner, Cambridge Consultants, an expert in ASIC Design and Rob Thompson who teaches Central St. Martins School of Art & Design's 'Design in Consumer Electronics' Course.

Following the presentations, there will be a roundtable discussion on the future direction that the Product Design Forum will take and an invitation for members to consider acting as a chairperson. In the future, we would like to establish this group as a focal point for technology product design in the future and provide means to articulate the support the sector needs from both government and wider industry.

If you have any interest in this area, or simply wish to keep up to speed with the latest development, please contact
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HR Today

Employment law changes and free HR services.

On Course

Regular update on Intellect's training courses.

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Switched On

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

Whitehall Watch

Fortnightly public affairs digest.

Skills initiatives gather pace

As we highlighted in the July issue of Short Circuit, Intellect has been focusing recently on how we encourage a systematic, government funded system for skills and training delivery in order to help mitigate what is an ever increasing problem for the UK electronics sector: the lack of appropriately skilled individuals in the workplace.

A recent survey conducted with the Electronics Manufacturing Services Association (EMSA) members highlighted that 45% of respondents felt that skills shortages was the primary factor that hindered ability to fulfil current contracts.

We've made substantial progress in ensuring that the two IPC certified training centres currently operating in the UK: Electronics Yorkshire and Advanced Rework Technology (ART) are able to accredit their courses as fully recognised qualifications. This will mean that manufacturers will be able to access substantial government funding, through the Train to Gain programme, to send their employees on their courses. This could mean that training shop-floor staff to standards like IPC-610-A and IPC 600G could become much more affordable to employers.

Some of these providers have mobile

training facilities that can visit your company and train people direct, freeing up your own trainers' time. We are still at the preliminary stages of this process, but its looking like a substantial money saving opportunity for members. Watch this space.



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Demand for single sided PCBs comes back to the UK

GSPK Circuits Ltd has reported an unprecedented increase in demand for the manufacture of their single sided PCBs.

Sources within the company have acknowledged a 50% rise in both interest and the order book following what is believed to be as a direct result of a combination of two factors; the increasing closure of UK based PCB manufacturers and also the change in focus for both Chinese and laminate manufacturers to higher layer counts.

GSPK Circuits had built up an enviable reputation for manufacturing single sided PCBs in medium to high volume runs utilising short manufacturing lead times, but witnessed a decline in demand five years ago when customers started sourcing this requirement from the Far East.

Martyn Gibson, operations director for GSPK Circuits Ltd said, "This latest industry development is having a very positive impact on our business. We have been fortunate to have been able

to identify this macro change at a very early stage and have reacted quickly and are capitalising on this market opportunity. We are in the very fortunate position to have retained our key personnel within this field and our reputation for manufacturing quality single sided PCBs and the level of customer service we provide has stood us in good stead for this market upturn."

www.gspkcircuits.ltd.uk

Apprenticeship laws to change

More on skills this month... The government has recently published a draft Apprenticeship's bill that substantially changes the way these important schemes are designed and delivered. Unlike many government initiatives, this one looks to have a large potential upside for those active in the electronics sector. According to our assessments, the new law passed will permit employers and employer organisations to formulate their own frameworks for apprenticeships in conjunction with Sector Skills Councils. Once approved, those apprenticeships will be eligible for full public funding. The new law will also make it compulsory for schools to promote apprenticeships alongside A-Levels and University as career options as well as establish a National Apprenticeship

Service, which will match apprentices with apprenticeship places on a national basis.

There is a real role for a trade body in this process. Industry could come together through Intellect to formulate an apprenticeship system specifically tailored to the subsectors we focus on within electronics. Under this new legislation, we could potentially create, for example, a PCB Fabricator or EMS Provider 'Apprenticeship'. This would go a long way towards creating the kind of pool of skilled labour needed to secure the sectors long term future in the UK.

We are aware that a number of members already operate their own similar schemes and if this expertise could be pooled, it would help to ensure

that all employees entering the sector are equipped with the right skills to be as productive employees as possible. Electronics groups will be consulted on this concept over the next few weeks, however, if you are interested in apprenticeships and your company would like to promote the concept of an apprenticeship scheme for your sector, please get in touch with us as soon as you can.



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Business go green to beat the economic blues

Environmental measures could be the answer to combating the downturn with new research launched showing that waste prevention, using less raw material and energy recovery will be crucial to saving UK companies money in the face of economic recession.

More than 85 per cent of companies questioned by sustainable business experts Envirowise on environmental measures to cut costs, chose the above actions as a way to make their businesses more profitable. The findings follow a warning by the British Chamber

of Commerce this week on firms facing 'a difficult and risky climate' in the next six to nine months with recession looming. The research, says Envirowise, shows growing recognition that waste minimisation and resource efficiency have become business imperatives in the current economic climate if companies are going to reduce costs and keep up their green credentials.

"With fuel, energy and raw material costs continuing to rise and changes in the economy persisting in creating challenging marketplaces, there has

never been a better time to lead the way in using resources wisely, eliminating waste and ultimately raising environmental standards," said Elaine Sharp, a Programme Manager for Envirowise.

Research by various bodies over the past three years has seen a changing attitude towards environmental practices. MORI research in 2005 saw 3 in 5 businesses (60%) with an environmental policy compared to just 11 per cent in 2003.

www.envirowise.gov.uk

The way forward for UK electronics

The UK electronics industry has changed greatly over the past few years. Increased competition from overseas, as well as the general drift towards a more service orientated economy, has meant that the need for industry to work together to adapt to these new realities is greater than ever.

The primary means for Intellect members to engage with industry-wide issues, monitor how the market is developing, and agree common positions on issues crucial to the future health of the market is through our subsector specific interest

groups. Each interest group is chaired by a well known industry figure, and meets on a quarterly basis.

We realise that membership of a trade association is a significant investment for many companies, and that you should get a noticeable return on that investment.

Intellect has the unique capability to put you in a room with key decision makers from major purchasers of components as well as household name OEMs whether they are existing customers or not.

This can prove crucial in developing your business for the future.

To find out more about electronics

growth and our offerings, download 'The way forward for UK electronics' report from our website at www.intellectuk.org/electronicsgrowth



Prism Electronics wins trans-Atlantic contract

Prism has secured a contract to supply PCBs to a US manufacturer of niche industrial inkjet printers.

The US company's latest product is an industrial inkjet printer which uses technology developed in the UK by Xennia of Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

Xennia undertook the initial design, engineering development work and production of prototype printers. It worked closely with Prism as a supplier

of the PCB assemblies needed for the new printer. Once the product was ready for commercial-scale production in the USA, Xennia recommended Prism as a continuing supplier of PCB assemblies.

Prism has assisted the manufacturer take the prototypes into production, further developing the PCB assembly designs and ensuring that the electronics meet the requirements of worldwide standards such as the Restrictions on Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive.

Tracey Stephens at Xennia said, "Xennia was very happy to introduce Prism to our customer as a result of the excellent service we received."

David Dickin of Prism said, "Despite having access to global subcontractors, the US manufacturer contracted Prism to provide production and support. We have been delighted with this vote of confidence in our capabilities."

www.prism-electronics.com

Date for your diary: Tuesday 25 November 2008

Intellect Annual Charity Ball
'A night at the Moulin Rouge'



Flex-Ability strengthens technical team

Flex-Ability are delighted to announce the appointment of Graham Temple as technical manager.

This is a new post created to help the company continue to provide comprehensive technical support to its growing customer base. Graham, a well-known and respected figure within the industry brings over 35 years

experience in the PCB industry and specifically, 25 years experience in the manufacturing of flex and flex rigid printed circuit boards.

Graham commented, "I'm looking forward to harnessing my experience and knowledge to the existing expertise at Flex-Ability to help advance the Technical capability of the company."

Nick Wass, technical director, says "attracting a man of the calibre of Graham Temple to the company reflects the continued success of Flex-ability Ltd and our desire to ensure that as a company we are continually striving to meet the needs of our customers."

www.flex-ability.co.uk

Prism and CME deliver interactive dining experience - Inamo

Prism has helped Cambridge Micro Engineering (CME) deliver an innovative automated menu ordering system to a pioneering new London restaurant. The delivery of the new system was possible due to a longstanding close link between the two companies.

Inamo is an Oriental fusion restaurant and bar in Soho, central London, where control of the dining experience is placed in the hands of the diner. At the core of this experience is an interactive ordering system. Diners place orders from an illustrated food and drinks menu projected on to their table surface. Diners can customise the mood of their table by changing lighting or choose from a selection of animated appearance settings to create a virtual tablecloth.

Prism Electronics manufactured the printed circuit boards (PCBs) for the interface between a wireless electronic

POS device and touchpad. Each table in the 60-seat ground floor restaurant has its own projector housed in a differently designed cocoon. Prism manufactured the boards that enable the transfer of data from the tabletop menu to the POS system.

As well as navigating through food and drink options diners are able to view the Inamo chefs working in real time and browse for practical information about the local Soho neighbourhood. The system even includes taxi booking facilities.

A touch screen showing the menu items and other features is embedded in the dining table top. The diners touch the relevant icons on the interactive table and orders will be sent via an electronic point of sale system to the kitchen where their orders will be prepared and dispatched. The icons and features are

projected onto the table top using a central PC projector.



The combined skills of Prism Electronics and CME meant that the Inamo design was taken from concept stage through to full manufacture quickly and efficiently.

"Prism and CME have worked successfully together on a number of projects so we have been able to bring a wealth of accumulated knowledge and experience to the table," said David Dickin, business development director at Prism.

www.prism-electronics.com

Price increase for IPC standards

The first price increases for IPC documents since 2004 are scheduled from 01 September 2008.

Most documents have been subject to a 3% price increase, and a new minimum price of \$26.00 to cover expenses has been introduced.

To avoid disrupting certification activities, the most widely used documents will not have price increases, so the effect on businesses should be minimal.

The following documents do not have price increases in any formats/languages:

- ▶ IPC-A-610D
- ▶ J-STD-001
- ▶ IPC-A-620
- ▶ IPC-A-600G
- ▶ IPC-6012B
- ▶ IPC-2221A
- ▶ IPC-7095A

In addition, there are no changes to prices of posters, desk reference manuals, DVD training products, certification materials, market research reports or artwork.

Intellect members can purchase IPC standards documents for IPC member rates – that's about 50% less than non-member rates.

**For more information please contact
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Intellect welcomes new electronics members

We would like to welcome the following companies who have recently become members of Intellect.

Custom Interconnect

CIL are experts in leading edge SMT PCB and Through hole PCB assembly technologies. CIL has invested heavily over the last three years and is able to offer the following technologies all to ISO9001:2000 quality standards.

www.cil-uk.co.uk

Jaltek Systems

Jaltek are a leading international service provider offering an effective end-to-end capability in the design and manufacture of complex electronic assemblies. Based in the UK, Jaltek provide professional and accessible services to a wide range of clients from start-up through to blue chip and have in depth knowledge and broad experience of a wide range of market sectors and product technologies.

www.jaltek.com

Hypertac

With more than 50 years of experience in the industrial and military markets, Hypertac is a leading supplier of world class interconnect

solutions to electrical and electronic applications requiring superior quality, performance and reliability.

www.hypertac.com



Paragon Chartered Chemists

Established in 1994, Paragon Chartered Chemists are leading independent industrial chemists providing services to industry. Their mission is to work in partnership with our clients to ensure compliance with the statutory duties relating to hazardous chemicals.

www.paragoncharteredchemists.co.uk

Printed Wiring Technologies

Printed Wiring Technologies Ltd (PWT) manufactures high quality PCBs in small to medium volumes; offering industry leading fast turnaround deliveries across an extensive range of technologies, in support of a global customer base. We also offer a high quality procurement service for larger volumes through our sister company PCB Offshore Services.

www.pwtpcb.com

QinetiQ to apply defence expertise to Warren Street tube station modernisation

QinetiQ, the international defence and security technology company has won a multi-million pound contract to support Metronet Rail on the modernisation of Warren Street station.

QinetiQ will bring a breath of fresh air to the London Underground station by re-cladding walls and ceilings within the station using panels made from a fibre-reinforced polymer (FRP) composite manufactured by BFG International based in Bahrain.

Unlike the metallic panels that are traditionally used on the tube network, the FRP panels fitted by QinetiQ are more adaptable to architectural features and inherently resistant to corrosion. Importantly they are also the

only composite panels to meet London Underground's stringent requirements for fire safety.

Over many decades, from the invention of carbon fibre to its widespread use today, QinetiQ has built up an unparalleled knowledge in composite materials. QinetiQ is also drawing on its expertise in technology insertion and systems integration to incorporate other technologies such as lighting, water management and panel-based speakers into their station cladding system.

Metronet Rail, now owned by Transport for London, is revitalising and upgrading two-thirds of the Tube. QinetiQ and Metronet are already working together on



modernising platforms at Holborn station.

Clive Richardson, chief operating officer of QinetiQ's EMEA business said, "We are delighted to be working with Metronet Rail to ensure they meet the demanding timetable set for station refurbishment. For us, working flexibly alongside the customer to meet their needs is just as important as providing an innovative technical solution."

www.qinetiq.com

News in brief

Games less virtual, more reality

While most massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) are based on fantasy worlds, there is a growing trend for a new kind of game that merges the real world with the virtual.

Source: BBC

Businesses get lesson in social skills

Businesses looking at social networking technology should make sure their goals have the potential to attract a community that generates content as well as provide tangible business benefits.

Source: silicon.com

Europe is key, says Future Electronics president Robert Miller

Future Electronics has made a long term commitment to the European electronics market with plans for a new €40m distribution centre in Leipzig, Germany. Robert Miller, founder and president of Future Electronics, the third largest component distributor, was in the UK last week to talk to customers and suppliers to tell them of the company's plans for Europe.

Source: Electronics Weekly

Financial services meltdown will re-shape IT industry

Two weeks of meltdown in the financial services sector will have major repercussions both on City IT professionals and the IT suppliers that directly and indirectly support the sector.

As the sector that spends the most on IT cuts its budgets, suppliers will be met with falling revenues and demands from IT departments for higher returns on their investments.

Source: Computer Weekly

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Intellect's monthly newsletter **Short Circuit** is distributed throughout the UK PCB and EMS industries. Sponsoring an issue means that your company logo, contact details and news article will be seen industry-wide - an effective and inexpensive promotional tool.

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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Intellect Product Design Forum

Date: 15 October 2008
Time: 10:00-15:00
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EE



Intellect is pleased to invite members to the next meeting concerning 'Product Design', a dedicated interest group for anyone with an interest in the field of technology product design. Formed in 2007, the group focuses on formulating best practice in technology product design as well as the discussion of the relative benefits of emerging enabling technologies.

This meeting of the Product Design Forum will

follow two differing work strands. The morning session will focus on three key areas:

- ▶ effective integration of the needs of end-users in the design process
- ▶ innovations in micro-electronic design
- ▶ emerging Enabling technologies

The afternoon session will be based around a roundtable discussion for Intellect members and invited guests, and will seek to establish the key workstreams for the Product Design Forum moving forward.

Cost: Intellect members free of charge
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Electronics manufacturing reception

Date: 16 October 2008
Time: 17:30-19:30
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5EE



We are pleased to announce the second in our series of events specifically tailored to help electronic manufacturers gain insight to the procurement strategy of major customers.

This is an excellent chance to focus and expand your portfolio of customers. You will hear keynote speakers provide high-level insights into their respective markets.

What's being talked about?

Procurement executives and directors from multinational OEMs, in a variety of different sectors, will give specific insight into how they choose manufacturing partners and what their upcoming requirements will be.

Guest speakers

- ▶ Neil Rodgers, Chief Procurement Officer, British Telecom
- ▶ Jaynie Huish, Head of Commercial, Subcontract & Partnering, EADS Defence & Security

Cost: Intellect members free of charge
Contact: Henry Parker
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Requirements for positioning technologies in crisis management

Date: 23 October 2008
Time: 09:00-17:00
Venue: Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EE



A full day focused on user requirements from positioning technologies that can be used to manage unexpected incidents and emergencies. Providers will have the chance to hear directly from users the frequent problems they face.

This event will take us through case studies of crisis management, and investigate how

technology can serve to better quell disasters at a local and international level. The focus will be on operational issues and the crisis management of natural and man-made disasters (both industrial and terrorist).

Why should I attend?

Hear the latest thinking in your field - representatives from BAPCO, Military Aid services and NGO organisations will share their wealth of experience.

Cost: Intellect members £135+VAT
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