



The European Institute for the PCB Community

EIPC NEWS

EIPC ANNOUNCE THEIR TECHNICAL SNAPSHOTS

Limited seats available!

An EIPC Webinar is just like one of their Conference, except that you do not have to travel, you do not have a beer with colleagues, you do not enjoy excellent food, and you do not enjoy convivial company. But we do not live in normal times, and some things are not the same. Manufacturing PCBs, however, remains comfortingly complex, and so on

18th November 2020 at 1500 hours CEST

EIPC will hold a Webinar at which three very reassuring gentlemen will help matters become a little clearer.

In the 45-minute session, moderated by our Chairman Alun Morgan, we will hear from **PRISMARK Dr. SHIUH-KAO CHIANG**, who will show how the pandemic has substantially distorted PCB production patterns and demand expectations. He will reflect on the 2020 PCB market and discuss the various key factors that drive or alter the market momentum.

Prismark Abstract:

2020 is a year to remember. This is probably the first time that the global electronics and PCB industries are deeply impacted by an infectious disease. Furthermore, the pandemic has substantially distorted PCB production patterns and demand expectations. As a result, the 2020 PCB market is very different from originally anticipated. In this presentation, Prismark will present its views on the 2020 PCB market and discuss the various key factors that drive or alter the market momentum.

MIKE VINSON from Averatek will look at how the availability of thinner high-performance materials brings many advantages to board layout and design without affecting impedance requirements.

Averatek Abstract:

The trace size on today's high speed circuits are often limited by impedance matching and dielectric thickness. Semi-Additive PCB fabrication enabling smaller, more accurate traces with straighter more precise trace sidewalls in combination with the availability of thinner high-performance materials bring many advantages to board layout and design without affecting impedance requirements. This presentation will discuss the A-SAP™ process and its impact on signal integrity and PCB design.

From ROLAND HEROLD of Atotech, who will underline the importance of reliability when plating electrolytic stacked blind micro vias (BMVs), and give an overview about the latest findings & developments in electrolytic copper.

Atotech Abstract:

The continuously increasing thermo-mechanic reliability requirements for e.g. automotive electronics and 5G hand-held PCBs needs a better understanding of all production processes.

Apart from the contribution of the well-known factors like base material properties, pressing/lamination & drilling conditions, de-smearing & deposition parameter of the conductive seed layer, the set-up of the electrolytic copper process plays an important role in advanced interface reliability between stacked micro-vias.

The webinar introduces into the gives an overview about the latest findings & developments in electrolytic copper.

There will be a Q&A session after the last speaker.

For EIPC members the seminar is free of charge; for non-members the fee will be € 50,-

Please contact us to reserve your place.

To register for November 18th please fill in the online registration on www.eipc.org or send an email to kwestenberg@eipc.org



The European Institute for the PCB Community

EIPC SPEeDNEWS

*The Weekly On-Line Newsletter from the European Institute of Printed Circuits.
Issue 28 - November 2020*

NEWS FROM CHINA

China focuses on building own core tech

KEEPING DOORS OPEN: *A Chinese official said that 'complete decoupling is not realistic, and it is not good for China,' as many want the countries to cooperate*

- Bloomberg

China yesterday said that it needs to build its own core technology because it cannot rely on buying it from elsewhere, as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) laid out plans for greater economic self-sufficiency.

Outlining details of its new five-year economic plan that elevates self-reliance in technology and innovation, senior party officials said that the nation would accelerate development of the kind of technology needed to spur the next stage of economic development.

Key to that are bold measures to cut reliance on foreign know-how, although that does not mean that China would cut itself off from the world.

"To achieve technological advancement, China increasingly needs the world, and the world increasingly needs China," Chinese Minister of Science and Technology Wang Zhigang told a briefing in Beijing.

The nation planned to "improve our ability to make innovations independently and do our own things well, because we cannot ask for or buy the core technologies from elsewhere," he said.

At the same time, "we hope to learn from advanced international experience, and will share more Chinese technological outcomes with the world," he said.

Tech stocks were some of yesterday's best-performers. Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp, the country's largest chipmaker, surged as much as 8 percent in Hong Kong in its biggest intraday gain in about two weeks. On mainland bourses, Gigadevice Semiconductor Beijing Inc. climbed its 10 percent limit, becoming the biggest gainer on the CSI 300 index as of early afternoon.

Beijing's drive for tech self-sufficiency is gaining urgency as the US seeks to contain the rise of its geopolitical rival. The US has pressured allies to shun equipment from Huawei Technologies Co, barred dozens of China's largest tech companies from buying US parts, and even slapped bans on ByteDance Ltd's TikTok and Tencent Holdings Ltd's WeChat.

However, officials talked down prospects of a decoupling between the world's two largest economies and said that China's door would remain open for foreign competition.

"Complete decoupling is not realistic, and it is not good for China, the United States and the whole world," a CCP Central Committee official Han Wenxiu said at the briefing. "The truth is very few would really want to see the two countries decouple. Most would want our two countries to cooperate and work together."

The Central Committee released initial details of the five-year plan on Thursday, stressing the need for sustainable growth and also pledging to develop a robust domestic market.

Officials did not specify the pace of growth they would seek over the period, but said that the National Development and Reform Commission would work on guidelines to be submitted to the parliament in March.

"Based on the general direction and strategy determined in the proposal, we will put forward corresponding numeric targets and specific indicators after careful estimate and calculation, so as to promote the reasonable economic growth and the steady improvement of its quality," Chinese National Development and Reform Commission vice chairman Ning Jizhe said at the briefing.

Wang said that it was a strategic choice to elevate the role of innovation and make technological self-reliance a strategic pillar of national development in the plan.

Han separately said that there are "three priorities of paramount importance. They are: reform, opening up and innovation."

Central to that endeavour is self-reliance in chips, the building blocks for innovations from artificial intelligence to fifth-generation networking and autonomous vehicles.

The government intends to confer the same priority on semiconductor development that it accorded to building its atomic capability, people with knowledge of the matter have said.

That is said to include broad support for so-called third-generation semiconductors — a nascent field in which no nation yet claims dominance — for the period through 2025.



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NEWS FROM ELECTRONICA



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ELECTRONIC INDUSTRY NEWS

MIT Team's Cough Detector Identifies 97% of COVID-19 Cases Even in Asymptomatic People

DAVID NIELD

3 NOVEMBER 2020

Part of the challenge in controlling the coronavirus pandemic is in identifying and isolating infected people quickly – not particularly easy when COVID-19 symptoms aren't always noticeable, especially early on. Now scientists have developed a new artificial intelligence model that can detect the virus from a simple forced cough.

Evidence shows that the AI can spot differences in coughing that can't be heard with the human ear, and if the detection system can be incorporated into a device like a smartphone, the research team thinks it could become a useful early screening tool.

The work builds on research that was already happening into Alzheimer's detection through coughing and talking. Once the pandemic started to spread, the team turned its attention to COVID-19 instead, tapping into what had already been learned about how disease can cause very small changes to speech and the other noises we make.

"The sounds of talking and coughing are both influenced by the vocal cords and surrounding organs," says research scientist Brian Subirana, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

"This means that when you talk, part of your talking is like coughing, and vice versa."

"It also means that things we easily derive from fluent speech, AI can pick up simply from coughs, including things like the person's gender, mother tongue, or even emotional state. There's in fact sentiment embedded in how you cough."

The Alzheimer's research repurposed for COVID-19 involved a neural network known as ResNet50. It was trained on a thousand hours of human speech, then on a dataset of words

spoken in different emotional states, and then on a database of coughs to spot changes in lung and respiratory performance.

When the three models were combined, a layer of noise was used to filter out stronger coughs from weaker ones. Across around 2,500 captured cough recordings of people confirmed to have COVID-19, the AI correctly identified 97.1 percent of them – and 100 percent of the asymptomatic cases.

That's an impressive result, but there's more work to do yet. The researchers emphasise that its main value lies in spotting the difference between healthy coughs and unhealthy coughs in asymptomatic people – not in actually diagnosing COVID-19, which a proper test would be required for. In other words, it's an early warning system.

"The effective implementation of this group diagnostic tool could diminish the spread of the pandemic if everyone uses it before going to a classroom, a factory, or a restaurant," says Subirana.

The fact that the test is non-invasive, virtually free to run and speedy to apply adds to its potential usefulness – while it's not designed to *diagnose* people with COVID-19 who are already showing symptoms, it could tell you if you should isolate and get a proper test when no major signs of the virus are showing.

The researchers now want to test the engine on a more diverse set of data, and see if there are other factors involved in reaching such an impressively high detection rate. If it does make it to the phone app stage, there are obviously going to be privacy implications too, as few of us will want our devices constantly listening out for signs of ill health.

Once we start to put the coronavirus pandemic behind us, the new research could help feed back into the study of coughs and Alzheimer's detection. The data show that the neural networks only required slight tweaking in order to be adapted to each condition.

"Our research uncovers a striking similarity between Alzheimer's and COVID discrimination," write the researchers in their published paper.

"The exact same biomarkers can be used as a discrimination tool for both, suggesting that perhaps, in addition to temperature, pressure or pulse, there are some higher-level biomarkers that can sufficiently diagnose conditions across specialties once thought mostly disconnected."

The research has been published in the [*IEEE Open Journal of Engineering in Medicine and Biology*](#).



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NEWS FROM GERMANY

Notion Systems sells another n.jet soldermask inkjet printer to Elekonta Marek

With the investment in an inkjetsystem from Notion Systems, we are expanding our technical and technological possibilities in the production of printed circuit boards and are consistently pursuing the path of digitalisation. We are impressed by the possibilities that can be realised through inkjet technology, says Lars Presche – Managing Director of Elekonta Marek.

The n.jet soldermask is an inkjet system that prints soldermask contactless and digitally. The inkjet printing process replaces a number of conventional process steps, is extremely easy to maintain, reduces wastewater, lowers energy consumption and this makes electronics production more ecological and economical. Furthermore, inkjet technology can be used to create structures that open up new possibilities in PCB production.

“The order from Elekonta shows that additive manufacturing is making in-roads into printed circuitboard production and that leading companies are investing even in difficult times”, says Frank Tinnefeld – Sales manager of ASS Luippold; distributor Europe of Notion Systems.

Both companies will work very closely together in the further development of processes to further establish inkjet printing in the PCB industry.

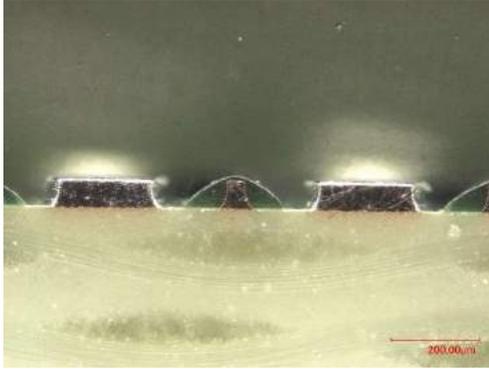


Photo: Printed circuit board Soldermask embedding of tracks

between 2 pads



Notion Systems – The Future of Additive Manufacturing

Notion Systems GmbH is a leading supplier of industrial ink jet printing systems. The *n.jet* inkjet platform from Notion Systems is used by customers to produce printed circuit boards, OLED & QLED displays, sensors and high-quality 3D parts. Notion Systems relies on decades of experience of their staff in bringing precise inkjet systems to customers and scaling up digital printing processes for functional material. Notion Systems is based in Schwetzingen close to Heidelberg – Germany and works together with leading sales and service organizations worldwide with focus on Asia, Europe and North America.

"Power & Beyond", the online platform for power electronics hits the 10,000 mark

Since its launch in January 2020, Power & Beyond has undergone a successful development. With the number of subscribers growing at an enormous rate, the amount of newsletter subscribers has recently risen to over 10,000.

The platform reaches around 100,000 unique users worldwide. As a digital extension, Power & Beyond takes up the topics of the PCIM Europe exhibition and conference. Within a mere few months, Power & Beyond has successfully established itself as a knowledge platform for the international power electronics industry. The growing interest in this 365-day offering shows the demand by all industries in the field of power electronics for market insights in areas, such as SiC and GaN, energy storage systems and electro-mobility. Power & Beyond meets this demand and provides information on trends and market dynamics with around 200 articles per year.

This content is catalogued under four main categories:

Products & Applications

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Industry News

Industry news, companies, studies, forecasts

Research & Development

Research, technical innovations, studies

Tools & Software

Test and inspection procedures, certifications, work equipment, software

Advertisers and suppliers of power electronics products benefit from a broad range of advertising opportunities on the platform and enabling reach to a specialist audience.

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www.messefrankfurt.com

Schweizer Electronic AG:

- **Business situation stabilised again**
- **Cost reduction programme successfully implemented**
- **Forecast confirmed for the 2020 fiscal year**

Schramberg, 6 November 2020 – The business development of the SCHWEIZER Group stabilised again in the third quarter. The positive revenue momentum for this period came predominantly from the automotive sector. After a sharp drop in sales in the second quarter, sales with SCHWEIZERs largest customer group rose again significantly in the third quarter.

With a **turnover** of EUR 23.6 million (2019: EUR 34.1 million), sales increased by +31.7 percent in the third quarter compared to the second quarter, which was weak due to the pandemic. As a result, total sales for the first three quarters of 2020 amounted to EUR 69.0 million, which corresponds to a decline of -26.8 percent compared to the previous year. The new Jintan/China plant, which went into production successfully in the middle of the year, generated sales of EUR 4.1 million in the first 9 months.

Incoming orders in the third quarter amounted to EUR 23.4 million, while delivery schedules were largely reduced in the second quarter. Incoming orders in the first three quarters thus totalled EUR 38.7 million, which corresponds to a decline of -36.2 percent compared to the same period in the previous year. The **order book** at the end of the third quarter amounted to EUR 101.7 million (31/12/2019: EUR 126.7 million).

Non-recurring effects and low utilisation burdened profitability

In the second and third quarter of 2020, short-time work was carried out both for production and administration in order to reduce the break-even point of the Schramberg plant. In order to counteract the impact of declining business volume and declining margin income, numerous saving measures were already implemented in personnel and material costs in the last financial year and continued in the reporting period. Compared to the reporting date of September 2019, the number of employees in Schramberg was reduced by around 10 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2020.

Costs for special expenses – in particular from restructuring – impacted upon earnings for the first nine months with a total of EUR -1.8 million.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) improved in the third quarter, but remained negative at EUR -2.3 million. EBITDA for the first three quarters amounted to EUR -7.9 million (2019: EUR +2.9 million), which equates to an EBITDA ratio of -11.5 percent (first to third quarter 2019: +3.1 percent).

Forecast

/

outlook

As expected, SCHWEIZER's business situation stabilised in the third quarter of 2020 compared to the previous quarter. The Executive Board expects this recovery trend to continue in the fourth quarter of 2020. This forecast is supported by a positive development in order momentum and an increasing business volume at the new location in China. Nevertheless, SCHWEIZER is unlikely to be able to fully reach the level of the previous year in the fourth quarter either. As a result, the Executive Board confirms the sales forecast which was adjusted in July to be between EUR 87 million and EUR 93 million, with the expectation that it should reach the upper end of the forecast range. Furthermore, the Executive Board confirms the expectation for the operating result before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of -8 percent to -12 percent, which amounts to a range of EUR -7 to -11 million.

Although the comprehensive restructuring measures at the Schramberg site have already significantly reduced the break-even threshold and will continue to do so in the fourth quarter, the result this year is still burdened by the extraordinary restructuring expense of more than EUR 2 million. Without these special expenses and taking into account the measures achieved and planned, a positive operating result for the Schramberg site is expected.

Due to the positive sales development, progressive fixed cost coverage is forecast for the location in China. Due to further investments in personnel and plant capacity, an operational loss is also expected for this location in the fourth quarter. This loss remains within expectations.

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HighTech Leiterplattenproduzent ILFA aus Hannover erweitert Angebotspalette um hochwertige Handelsware

Die ILFA GmbH/Hannover rückt 2021 unter die 5 größten unabhängigen Leiterplattenlieferanten in Deutschland auf. Mit der Übernahme des Handelsgeschäftes der Skytech GmbH erweitert ILFA seine Kapazitäten deutlich.

Seit 2008 ist Skytech Europe GmbH einer der führenden deutschen Händler für Leiterplattenserien. Skytech hat über viele Jahre sehr erfolgreich, weil stets auf höchste Qualität achtend, Leiterplatten aus 6 ausgewählten Werken aus Asien gehandelt. Hauptkundengruppen sind Industrie, Consumer und Automotive. Parallel zum Qualitätsversprechen hat die Liefertreue stets höchste Priorität, mit > 95% in 2019.

Mit Übernahme des Handelsgeschäftes einschließlich der erfahrenen Mitarbeiter und der laufenden Verträge per 1.11.2020 erweitert die ILFA GmbH ihr bestehendes Geschäft im Sinne der Kundeninteressen deutlich.

ILFA bietet damit Leiterplatten für die Industrieelektronik, Medizin, Luft/Raumfahrt und nun auch Automotive vom Prototypen bis zur Großserie an.

Auf Grund der großen technischen Kompetenz ist ILFA nun nicht nur in der Lage umfassend zu beraten sondern auch alles aus einer Hand zu liefern.

Parallel hat ILFA in den vergangenen Jahren über 7 Mio. € in die Produktion und die Prozessoptimierung investiert. Der Investitionsplan bis 2025 sieht weitere Investitionen in gleicher Größenordnung vor.

ILFA, als Unternehmen mit einem privaten deutschen Gesellschafterkreis, wird auch in 2021 weiter wachsen und damit zu den 5 größten unabhängigen Leiterplattenproduzenten in Deutschland gehören.

Dieser für ILFA strategisch wichtige Schritt kommt in einer Zeit, in der es für die heimische Leiterplattenindustrie darum geht, dem Kunden zu zeigen, dass der Leiterplatten/ Basiselektronikstandort Deutschland eine gute Zukunft hat.

High-tech PCB manufacturer ILFA acquires trade volume from Skytech

ILFA moves into the top 5 independent PCB suppliers in Germany in 2021.

With the acquisition of the PCB trade business form Skytech Europe GmbH, ILFA expands its offering and capacities significantly.

Since 2008 Skytech Europe GmbH is one of the leading German distributors for printed circuit board series. Skytech has been trading PCB very successfully from only 6 carefully selected factories in Asia, due to its focus on highest quality.

Main customer groups are industry, consumer and automotive.

Parallel to the quality promise, delivery reliability has always been a top priority, with > 95% OTD in 2019.

With the acquisition of Skytech Europe's trading activities including the well experienced staff, being effective November 1st 2020, ILFA will expand their existing business significantly in order to serve all former and new customers on an even higher level.

ILFA is now able to offer printed circuit boards from prototype to mass production for industrial electronics, medicine, aerospace and automotive.

Due to its extensive technical expertise, ILFA will now provide comprehensive advice and deliver PCB as a one stop shop.

At the same time, ILFA has invested more than € 7 million in production equipment and process optimisation in the past 5 years. The investment plan up to 2025 provides further investment in production at the same level.

ILFA, as a company with a private German shareholder base, will continue to grow making it one of the top 5 independent printed circuit board manufacturers in Germany.

This strategically important step for ILFA comes at a time when the domestic printed circuit board industry needs to demonstrate to customers that Germany as a location for printed circuit boards/ basic electronics has a bright future.



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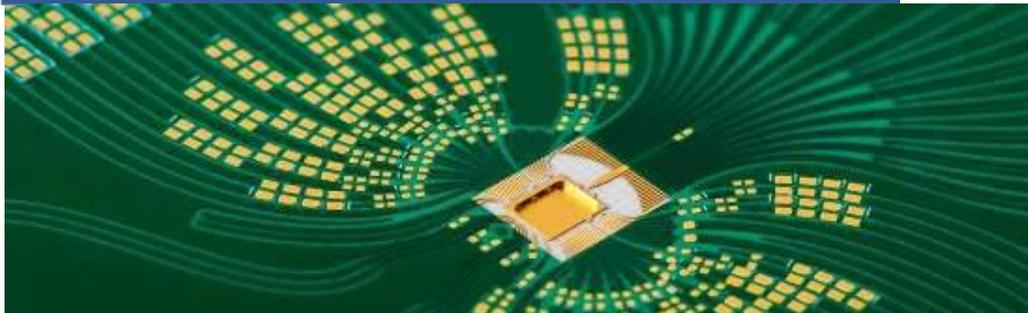
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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



electronica goes digital

Nov 2020



Dear Sir or Madam

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In light of the current situation, the trade fair is now being held online, hosting 207 exhibitors – and we are pleased to be one of them.

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For more information follow [electronica](#).

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We also give you exciting insight into our hot-topic "**RF substrates and miniaturisation**".

Our specialists will be on hand to answer your questions and engage in an in-depth discussion via live text or video chat throughout the four days.

You can already find some initial information about what to expect at electronica on our exhibitor profile.

During the fair, electronica will be open around the clock.

[More information](#) 

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NEWS FROM THE UK



Reminder - Just Over 1 Week to Book Your Place at:

IMAPS-UK "Making Sense of Sensors" Online Conference

Thursday 12 November 2020: 10:00 - 14:30 UK

Making Sense of Sensors provides an opportunity to learn from leading **Industry Experts, Materials Suppliers** and **Equipment Manufacturers** as they share their experiences and developments in this rapidly growing industry.

- **Assembly Processes** – vacuum, hermetic and non-hermetic packaging of MEMS and MOEMS devices
- **Sensor Types** – imaging, flow, pressure, LIDAR and tactile sensors
- **Graphene** – sensors applied in structural performance monitoring
- **3D Printing** – how 3D printing technologies are making an impact in sensor manufacturing

Organisations presenting include:

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IMAPS-UK/IEEE-EPS Thermal Management Online Conference

Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th November 2020

- **End User Needs** – challenges in **Automotive Electric Powertrain (BMW Group)** and **Industrial Motion Control Products (Siemens)**
- **Passive Cooling** – overcoming thermal management issues through advanced materials and processes
- **Active Cooling** – thermoelectric generators, additive manufacturing, embedded cooling
- **Measurement and Testing** – ensuring reliability/fitness for purpose
- **Simulation** – shortening the design and validation cycle

Organisations presenting include:

BMW Group, ASE, Indium Corporation, NPL, University of Greenwich, Siemens, MTC, Hieta, Columbia Staver and Mentor

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International Diary

2020

Electronica 2020 VIRTUAL

10-13 November
München, Germany

EIPC Technical Snapshot Webinar

Registrations via www.eipc.org
18 November

KPCA

24-26 November
Incheon, Korea

ECWC15, WECC World Electronics Circuits Council

Webinar
30 November-2 December

HKPCA Exhibition

2-4 December
Hong Kong, China

EIPC Technical Snapshot Webinar

Registrations via www.eipc.org
16 December

2021

IPC APEX EXPO

March
San Diego, USA

EIPC @ SMTconnect
4-6 May
Nuremberg, Germany