



The European Institute for the PCB Community

EIPC SPEeDNEWS

The Weekly On-Line Newsletter
Issue 31 - October 2023

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE NEWS

EU lawmakers face struggle to reach agreement on AI rules

European lawmakers are yet to agree on several issues related to new artificial intelligence rules ahead of a crucial meeting on Tuesday, leaving any deal off the table until December, according to four people familiar with the matter.

The draft AI rules have to be agreed by the European Parliament and European Union member states. They have so far been discussed three times in trilogues, which are meetings between parliament and EU states to thrash out the final versions of laws.

A fourth trilogue meeting will be held on Tuesday, a day after EU lawmakers are scheduled to discuss their negotiating stance around foundation models and high-risk AI systems, sources said.

Foundation models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, are AI systems that are trained on large sets of data, with the ability to learn from new data to perform a variety of tasks.

Spain, which holds the EU presidency until December, has been pushing for a deal and has proposed compromises in a bid to speed up the process. These include a tiered approach for regulating foundation models, defined as those with more 45 million users, according to a draft seen by Reuters. Spain also wants additional obligations for very capable foundation models (VCFM), such as ChatGPT, including regular vetting to uncover potential vulnerabilities.

Opponents say that smaller platforms can be equally risky.

Spain said it had consulted other EU countries on potential compromises ahead of the fourth trilogue. However, a final agreement is unlikely to be reached in that meeting, the sources said.

A fifth trilogue is due to be held in early December. Failure to reach a deal then could push negotiations to early next year. Discussions could then be further de-railed by the European parliament elections in June.

Several lawmakers, including EU industry chief Thierry Breton and co-rapporteurs for the AI Act, Drago Tudorache and Brando Benifei, had expressed hopes that the draft will be approved before the end of the year.

The EU started working on the draft AI Act in 2021. In May this year, the European parliament agreed on draft legislation including new rules around the use of facial recognition, biometric surveillance, and other AI applications.

Under the proposals, AI tools will be classified according to their perceived level of risk, from low to unacceptable. Governments and companies using these tools will have different obligations, depending on the classification.

Reporting by Supantha Mukherjee in Stockholm and Foo Yun Chee in Brussels; Editing by Matt Scuffham and Mike Harrison
[STOCKHOLM/BRUSSELS, Oct 23 \(Reuters\) -](#)

Governments race to regulate AI tools

Oct 26 (Reuters) - Rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) such as Microsoft-backed OpenAI's ChatGPT are complicating governments' efforts to agree laws governing the use of the technology.

Here are the latest steps national and international governing bodies are taking to regulate AI tools:

AUSTRALIA

Planning regulations

Australia will make search engines draft new codes to prevent the sharing of child sexual abuse material created by AI and the production of deepfake versions of the same material, its internet regulator said in September.

BRITAIN

Planning regulations

Governments and companies need to address the risks of AI head on, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Oct. 26 ahead of the first global AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park on Nov. 1-2.

Sunak added Britain would set up the world's first AI safety institute to "understand what each new model is capable of, exploring all the risks from social harms like bias and misinformation through to the most extreme risks".

Britain's data watchdog said on Oct. 10 it had issued Snap Inc's (SNAP.N) Snapchat with a preliminary enforcement notice over a possible failure to properly assess the privacy risks of its generative AI chatbot to users, particularly children.

CHINA

Implemented temporary regulations

China published proposed security requirements for firms offering services powered by generative AI on Oct. 12, including a blacklist of sources that cannot be used to train AI models.

The country issued a set of temporary measures in August, requiring service providers to submit security assessments and receive clearance before releasing mass-market AI products.

EUROPEAN UNION

Planning regulations

European lawmakers agreed on Oct. 24 on a critical part of new AI rules outlining the types of systems that will be designated "high risk", and inched closer to a broader agreement on the landmark AI Act, according to five people familiar with the matter. An agreement is expected in December, two co-rapporteurs said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Sept. 13 called for a global panel to assess the risks and benefits of AI.

FRANCE

Investigating possible breaches

France's privacy watchdog said in April it was investigating complaints about ChatGPT.

G7

Seeking input on regulations

G7 leaders in May called for the development and adoption of technical standards to keep AI "trustworthy".

ITALY

Investigating possible breaches

Italy's data protection authority plans to review AI platforms and hire experts in the field, a top official said in May. ChatGPT was temporarily banned in the country in March, but it was made available again in April.

JAPAN

Investigating possible breaches

Japan expects to introduce by the end of 2023 regulations that are likely closer to the U.S. attitude than the stringent ones planned in the EU, an official close to deliberations said in July.

The country's privacy watchdog has warned OpenAI not to collect sensitive data without people's permission.

POLAND

Investigating possible breaches

Poland's Personal Data Protection Office said on Sept. 21 it was investigating OpenAI over a complaint that ChatGPT breaks EU data protection laws.

SPAIN

Investigating possible breaches

Spain's data protection agency in April launched a preliminary investigation into potential data breaches by ChatGPT.

UNITED NATIONS

Planning regulations

The U.N. Security Council held its first formal discussion on AI in July, addressing military and non-military applications of AI that "could have very serious consequences for global peace and security", Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

Guterres has backed a proposal by some AI executives for the creation of an AI watchdog, and announced plans to start work on a high-level AI advisory body by the end of the year.

U.S.

Seeking input on regulations

The White House is expected to unveil on Oct. 30 a long-awaited AI executive order, which would require "advanced AI models to undergo assessments before they can be used by federal workers", the Washington Post reported.

The U.S. Congress in September held hearings on AI and an AI forum featuring Meta (META.O) CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

More than 60 senators took part in the talks, during which Musk called for a U.S. “referee” for AI. Lawmakers said there was universal agreement about the need for government regulation of the technology.

On Sept. 12, the White House said Adobe (ADBE.O), IBM (IBM.N), Nvidia (NVDA.O) and five other firms had signed President Joe Biden’s voluntary commitments governing AI, which require steps such as watermarking AI-generated content.

A Washington D.C. district judge ruled in August that a work of art created by AI without any human input cannot be copyrighted under U.S. law.

In July this year The U.S. Federal Trade Commission opened an investigation into OpenAI on claims that it has run afoul of consumer protection laws.

Compiled by Alessandro Parodi and Amir Orusov in Gdansk; editing by Kirsten Donovan, Mark Potter, Christina Fincher and Milla Nissi - Reuters



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NEWS FROM BELGIUM

This is how Eurocircuits achieves PCB Manufacturing and Assembly 100% in-House in Europe

Eurocircuits provides a single source for bare board and assembled PCB prototypes and small series. Their free to use online tools provide instant pricing and virtual manufacturing of your design before you order. All PCBs are manufactured and assembled in-house and in Europe in their own facilities to high sustainability standards.

Eurocircuits manufactures over 110,000 orders for PCBs and Assembled PCBs annually, serving nearly 20,000 users and more than 12,000 active customers across Europe. Dirk Stans, the Managing Partner at Eurocircuits, emphasises, “Our customers appreciate our role as a one-stop shop for PCBs and assemblies, with online tools for virtual manufacturing and local accountable experts by their side to achieve right first time deliveries out of our own manufacturing facilities in Europe, ensuring that all customer data remains within the Eurocircuits Group.”

The company maintains a clear focus on standard technologies for prototypes and small series, with 88% of all PCB orders shipped within 5 working days. Eurocircuits’ core competency lies in order pooling for various PCB technologies, including defined impedance, IMS, RF, and semi-flex (or flex to install), which effectively reduces manufacturing costs. Through this strategy, Eurocircuits consolidates different orders onto a single production panel, maximising the panel’s utility, cutting costs, and facilitating quicker standard delivery times.

Utilising eight automatic SMD lines, Eurocircuits exclusively assembles PCBs from its own PCB production from a batch size of 1 but always in series quality. Currently, 16% of all PCB orders are assembled and this number is

rising. Typical assembly orders range from 1 to 5 PCBs, with a 6 working days lead time (subject to component availability). All PCBs adhere to the IPC-A-600 class 2 and IPC-A-610 class 2 manufacturing standards.

Free DRC and DFM tools for engineers and PCB designers

“Hardware engineers constitute the most valuable creative resource in European electronics development. However, these professionals are currently grappling with significant workloads” notes Dirk Stans. Eurocircuits has integrated its manufacturing expertise into the Visualizer online engineering platform. Visualizer functions as a robust tool for design review and verification. These tools are free to use and available 24/7 in six languages, Visualizer also serves as a user-friendly platform for online ordering and calculations. Stans adds, “We approach this as a holistic package for design, ensuring that all elements are accessible within the engineer’s online account, streamlining the process.”

Both the PCB & PCBA Visualizer incorporate interactive DFM tools. These check that the data provided is complete and highlights any critical issues in the design along with specific suggestions to correct the issue. The primary objective is always to propose solutions, alternative components, or design modifications to achieve a production-ready right first-time design.

An industrial-quality design right the first time

The Visualizer uses over 700 rules to validate parameter selection and has over 970 pre-defined PCB build-ups for various PCB types. PCB designers also utilise the Visualizer to verify the data for PCB assembly. The BOM and CPL are cross-checked and validated against the data, supported by a comprehensive database of over 440,000 electronic parts.

Each PCB or electronic assembly undergoes a virtual pre-manufacturing process, empowering Hardware, and PCB designers to craft an accurate, industrial-grade design from the outset. This process ensures a validated parts list, assembly, and 3D data. By meticulously managing the PCB layout and component selection, designers can effectively control production costs and enhance hardware reliability.

Furthermore, a cost-optimised prototype can seamlessly transition into mass production, expediting market entry. The ease of outsourcing or relocating manufacturing further promotes the industrialization of the

design. This effectively eliminates all careless errors. Managing this data meticulously for both PCB and Assembly instils a sense of confidence in the client, particularly when planning for larger series.

About Eurocircuits

Eurocircuits, a leading European manufacturer of printed circuit boards and electronic assemblies, specialises in fast and cost-effective PCB manufacturing and PCB assembly with excellent on-time delivery for prototypes and small batches. Quick and easy online ordering and virtual fabrication allow designs to be reviewed before ordering to deliver projects on time and on budget. Founded in 1991 and based in Mechelen, Belgium, the group employs +500 people and manufactures to high sustainability standards in Europe.

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[Acknowledgements to newelectronics.co.uk](#)



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NEWS FROM FRANCE

ICAPE Group Announces Its 2023 Nine-month Revenue and Gross Margin

Yann DUIGOU, CEO of ICAPE Group, stated: “Our performance shows an increase in gross margin despite a business impacted by multiple exogenous factors. This success fully highlights the relevance of the Company’s business model, which is based on the optimization of our organization’s costs and on the gradual activation of existing synergies with our recent acquisitions. We remain confident in our ability to generate revenue of around €500 million by 2026, despite this difficult economic climate, in particular through our external growth strategy, which proved its worth for over 2 years now. We thus confirm our profitability targets for 2026, and intend to pursue our acquisitions, thus confirming our pipeline of potential targets in advanced discussions.”

In €m (IFRS standards)	9 months 2022 ¹	9 months 2023	M&A contribution	Var.	Var. on a like-for-like basis
Revenue	162.8	136.2	4.5	-	-19.1%
<i>% growth</i>		<i>-16.3%</i>			
Gross Margin	33.9	36.2	1.8	+6.7%	+1.3%
<i>% revenue</i>	<i>20.9%</i>	<i>26.6%</i>	<i>41.2%</i>	<i>+5.7</i>	

As of September 30, 2023, Group revenue stood at €136.2 million, down 16.3% compared with the performance achieved over the same period in 2022, restated for non-strategic activities being divested. As already mentioned in previous Group releases, this trend is due to several exogenous factors impacting the entire PCB distribution sector, notably persistent inflation, the continuing war in Ukraine, the slowdown in global demand, and persistently high inventory levels amongst the Group's main customers.

With purchasing costs of around €100.0 million as of September 30, 2023, down 22.4% compared to the figures as of September 30, 2022, ICAPE Group is pursuing its cost optimization policy, to which the synergies generated by its recent acquisitions are contributing. Taking this improvement into account, the Group's gross margin rose by +6.7% over the period to €36.2 million.

Pursuing the Group's growth trajectory to 2026

As explained on the occasion of its 2023 half-year results release, the Company is maintaining all its commercial and financial indicators for 2026 in this adverse context, with the exception of the gross margin one. This one will no longer be the subject of specific communication from 2024 onwards. This decision was taken in order not to disrupt the commercial relations established by the Group with its existing and future partners.

ICAPE Group aims to achieve:

Revenue of around €500 million by 2026; an average annual organic growth rate of 10% between 2023 and 2026; around €120 million in additional revenue through external growth by 2026; an EBIT margin of around 9.5% by 2026.

About ICAPE Group

Founded in 1999, ICAPE Group acts as a key technological expert in the PCB supply chain. With a global network of 36 subsidiaries and a major presence in China, where most of the world's PCB production is done, the Group is a one-stop-shop provider for the products and services which are essentials for customers. As of December 31, 2022, ICAPE Group recorded a consolidated revenue of nearly €220 million.

For more information: icape-group.com

1 Restated for DIVSYS US and subsidiary IRUS

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NEWS FROM GERMANY

SMTconnect 2024:

Complete range of innovative electronics manufacturing in focus

Innovative, compact, and efficient: The SMT connect trade fair for microelectronics is renowned as the annual industry meeting point for experts wishing to network, exchange ideas and present products and services in electronics manufacturing under one roof for all those in the industry. The SMTconnect will again open its doors in Nuremberg from 11 – 13.06.2024 and will be forging even closer ties with the PCIM Europe.

Since 1987, the SMTconnect stands out as a unique exhibition in Europe with a clear focus on the entire production process of microelectronic assemblies. With its comprehensive description of all elements required for the production process, the trade fair enables relevant decision-makers and industry experts to network directly at one place. Surface mounting is the special focus of the trade fair. However, the entire spectrum of materials, components, modules, printed circuit boards, assembly/interconnection technologies through to coating and test systems will also be displayed across all processes.

Concise knowledge platform of electronics manufacturing

To withstand the rapid development in all areas of electronics manufacturing and to meet the information requirements of trade visitors, the SMTconnect has become a permanent fixture in the calendar of several thousands of experts from the field every year.

The SMTconnect as "Connect trade fair" relevant to the industry

Due to its compact format, the SMTconnect enables market companions and trade visitors from the areas of development, manufacturing, service, and application of microelectronics to enter into a close, inspiring and direct exchange. The aim is to jointly drive forward the future of electronics manufacturing in Europe during this specialized trade fair.

Andreas Keller, CEO, of SmartRep GmbH confirms this aspect of the event: "For us, the SMTconnect is our most important and a real "connecting" trade show: We meet our complete customer base here and have time for intensive exchange."

Christel Kiechle, CEO, of pb tec solutions GmbH, also agrees: "We particularly appreciate the SMTconnect because of its unique atmosphere and manageable size. These factors mean that both customers and exhibitors often have more time and space for discussions than at many other, much larger trade shows."

The SMTconnect on the pulse of time: "Driving Manufacturing Forward"

Increasing miniaturization and the trend towards solutions such as 3D-MID, advanced packaging, multi-chip modules, etc. are giving higher priority and demands on complex systems and the materials as well as processes used in electronics manufacturing. True to the motto "Driving Manufacturing Forward", the concept of the SMTconnect is evolving to keep its finger on the pulse.

The organizer Mesago Messe Frankfurt has decided to compress the exhibition space of the SMTconnect with the objective of highly emphasizing the concise knowledge platform of electronics manufacturing for business-relevant contacts.

"Due to the redesigned hall layout of the SMTconnect in Halls 4 and 4A, the focus is on the quality of the space. The compactness supports the exchange between the exhibiting companies and the trade fair visitors. Furthermore, the synergies of the two trade fairs, the SMTconnect and the PCIM Europe will be used to stimulate dialogue between both expert communities," explains Jeannette Meyer, Deputy Vice President, SMTconnect.

”Perfect Fit“: The SMTconnect and the PCIM Europe

Next year, the SMTconnect will forge even closer ties with the PCIM Europe, the leading international meeting place for power electronics. The networking of experts from microelectronics production and power electronics enables not only an intensive exchange of experience but also a comprehensive view of the complete production process.

Benefiting from synergy effects

Experts from both fields generate create potential for cross-industry, tailor-made solutions to individual requirements. They can further create solutions for all aspects of packaging and interconnection technologies up to progressive integration at chip and PCB level. This direct link between the SMTconnect and the PCIM Europe thus adds value for all participants - both for the trade audience and the exhibiting companies.

The SMTconnect stands for the comprehensive presentation of all elements required for the production process in system integration. The PCIM Europe also shows solutions for the special requirements of power electronics for circuit carriers, conductor cross-sections, temperature resistance and assembly and connection technology. This holistic orientation of both trade fairs has great advantages:

This includes being able to support not only the complex decision-making processes of developers, engineers and production planners in ordering materials and components up to the investment in machines and equipment .The parallelism of the two trade fairs also serves the growing demand from different application areas, such as in the automotive sector, consumer goods, industrial or battery technology as well as reliable energy supply or power generation from renewable energies.

Further highlights of the SMTconnect will be published in early 2024. Additional information on the two trade fairs the SMTconnect and the PCIM Europe is available at www.smtconnect.com and www.pcim.com



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NEWS FROM TAIWAN

Global PCB players gather in Taiwan as AI expected to drive industry growth

With the TPCA Show 2023 being held from October 25 to October 27 in Taiwan, more than 450 PCB and IC substrate companies are participating in the exhibition.

According to the Taiwan Circuit Board Association (TPCA), IC substrates were the industry focus during the past year, generating 20% of the output value for PCBs. Most applications were increasing except for some segments like CPU, which suffered from the high inventory level in the second half of 2022.

As IC substrate manufacturers actively invest in the sector, the total investment is expected to reach US\$30 billion in the next three to five years. When production starts, substrates will likely account for 25% of the PCB market. It is estimated that the output value of the global substrate industry will achieve US\$22 billion in 2025.

TPCA estimated that de-stocking will gradually end as 2024 approaches. Smartphone, PC, and semiconductor industries are expected to begin recovering. EVs and AI servers will remain the growth drivers as the PCB industry is poised to make a comeback. The industry's output value increase will likely reach 8.1% next year. While the decline continues this year, the situation has been improved. The output value is estimated to decrease by 16.8% year-over-year in 2023.

PCB applications in consumer electronics, including home appliances and wearable devices, declined in the first quarter of 2023. Smartphone-related products also stayed sluggish. Decreasing iPhone sales impacted many

sales of Taiwan-based PCB manufacturers. Applications in network communication grew due to the development of telecommunication infrastructure and low-earth orbit satellites.

Demand for AI servers and high-performance computing has been growing. The chips in the two applications have adopted 2.5D and 3D packaging and more advanced ABF substrates during production. The situation complicates ABF substrate design and will drive the market growth between 2023 and 2025.

The TPCA Show 2023 has attracted many leading substrate companies, including Taiwan-based Unimicron, Kinsus, Nan Ya PCB, and Europe-based AT&S. Taiwanese PCB companies like Unitech and Liang Dar Technology and China-based China Eagle Electronic all participated in the trade show.

The TPCA Show will also host the 18th International Microsystems, Packaging, Assembly, and Circuits Technology (IMPACT) Conference, with Intel, ASE, and MediaTek set to deliver speeches on various topics.



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PRODUCTRONICA NEWS

Ventec and Taiyo Partner to Promote Their Advanced Materials Portfolio at Productronica 2023

Ventec International Group will team up with partner Taiyo to promote the synergy between Ventec's substrate materials and Taiyo solder masks, at Productronica 2023, Munich 14-17 November 2023 in Hall B3, Booth 242. Show highlights include Ventec's new Battlam materials portfolio for advanced battery-management applications, alongside high-performing RF materials for cutting-edge wireless systems. Ventec will also showcase Ventec Giga Solutions, its new cooperative venture for turnkey workflow solutions.

Together, Ventec and Taiyo present a PCB materials one-stop shop, where customers can source high-performing Ventec laminates and prepregs from ranges such as tec-speed for communication and backplane and tec-thermal for power and lighting. In addition to Taiyo's solder masks, available in a full range of colours, the one-stop shop can also supply a full range of copper foils, thermal interface materials, standard FR4, and special materials including flex-rigid and ultrathin.

"Productronica visitors can see how our Battlam and RF curated portfolios help customers quickly identify the right materials for their application and get to market ahead of the competition," said Mark Goodwin, COO, Ventec International Group. "We will provide a second helping of the refreshing formula we established at Electronica 12 months ago, as we again team up with Taiyo. This time, we will also highlight the value-add from our new Ventec Giga Solutions division to conceive, commission, and support highly automated PCB manufacturing capacity. It's a service we expect to find growing demand as the industry moves to increase the resilience of its supply chains."

Ventec's Battlam portfolio contains hand-picked high-performing substrate materials that offer optimal parameters for applications in automotive, aerospace, and industrial sectors including utility-grade energy storage. The materials include polyimide-based, halogen-free, low-CTE, and CAF-resistant substrates, as well as unclad laminates, used everywhere from terminal plates to BMS circuitry.

The advanced tec-speed radio frequency material portfolio serves state-of-the-art communication, aerospace, and scientific applications including 5G infrastructure and terminal equipment targeting 3GPP upper and lower frequency ranges. Leveraging Ventec's expertise in PTFE, with its excellent molecular properties, tec-speed steps up wherever high signal speed, low loss, and environmental robustness are needed.

Ventec's experts will be present throughout the event to explain the products and services available, including Ventec's wholly-owned supply chain that safeguards product integrity and delivery performance. All Productronica visitors are invited to visit the booth, B3.242, to experience firsthand the latest innovations.

productronica – the world's leading trade fair for electronics development and production – will start in Munich in a few weeks' time. From November 14 to 17, more than 1,300 exhibitors from 45 countries will present their latest solutions and products. An extensive supporting program will supplement the exhibition area on all four days of the event. The sponsor of the industry's most important event is VDMA Productronic.

VDMA special show on sensors in electronics manufacturing and quantum technology in power electronics

Three forums as a platform for exchange and discourse

Presentation of the productronica innovation award in six categories

This year's productronica will focus on the key topics of power electronics, quantum technology, and artificial intelligence and sensor technology in electronics manufacturing. That is also the focus of the VDMA Productronic Special Show. Live demonstrations will provide visitors with insights into sensor technology in the field of electronics manufacturing, into quantum technology, and also power electronics, as VDMA speaker Sandra Engle explains: "We are delighted to have gained leading experts from the individual fields for the special show in the form of the companies Balluff, Breuer-Motoren, and Quantum Valley Lower Saxony. They will present

practical examples, setting the tone in the areas of automation, power electronics for electric mobility, and quantum research.”

Three productronica forums as a platform for exchange and discourse

Presentations and discussion panels in the three forums at productronica will offer the opportunity for a professional exchange on current and future market and technology topics. The productronica Forum in Hall A1 will focus on trends in the SMT industry such as automation, artificial intelligence, and workforce efficiency. In the PCB & EMS Marketplace (Hall B3), experts will showcase developments and solutions in the field of printed circuit boards, circuit carrier manufacturing, and hybrid components. Innovations determine the content in the forum of the same name (Hall B2), covering a wide range of topics including power electronics, quantum technology, AI applications in electronics manufacturing, or also the hot topic of semiconductors. In a panel discussion, four dedicated women will discuss the question: “How can women be motivated to enter the electronics industry?”

Hands-on technology: live demonstrations at productronica

Visitors will enjoy an even more practical experience at the live demonstrations. In addition to the VDMA Special Show, the Cleanroom, the IPC Hand Soldering Competition, and the Inno Truck allow visitors to experience technology up close.

While the Cleanroom and Hand Soldering Competition, as permanent fixtures, have already been providing information on cleanroom technology or a better understanding of hand soldering for many years, the Inno Truck is celebrating its productronica premiere. It is a truck that has been converted into a research laboratory that is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to promote interest in technologies in a playful way, and at the same time get young people interested in technical professions.

Individual career planning in the Career Area

The shortage of skilled workers is also affecting the electronics industry. The topic of recruiting is therefore becoming increasingly important for companies, which is why productronica is offering a combination of interactive job exchange and individual career advice this year in the form of the Career Area. On the one hand, it offers exhibitors the opportunity to present themselves as attractive employers. On the other, it allows young professionals, students, and specialists to find exciting jobs and information about companies and the industry. In addition, professional career

consultants from Schuh-Eder Consulting are available daily to answer individual questions about career opportunities in the electronics industry.

Presentation of the productronica innovation award in six categories

This marks the fifth time that Messe München is presenting the productronica Innovation Award in cooperation with Hüthig Verlag. The exhibitors have submitted around 70 new products. An independent jury comprising representatives from institutes, universities and associations determines the winners. The award will be presented on the first day of the trade fair in the six categories PCB & EMS, SMT, Inspection & Quality, Semiconductors, Cables, Coils & Hybrids, and Future Production.

Oct 25, 2023

What's New In Electronics



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NEWS FROM THE TPCA

2023 TPCA Show, hosted by the Taiwan Printed Circuit Board Association (TPCA), convened over 450 global PCB brands and featured 1,376 booths representing participants from Europe, the United States, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and more

Embracing sustainability and smart manufacturing in the PCB Industry: insights from the 2023 TPCA Show

The 2023 TPCA Show, hosted by the Taiwan Printed Circuit Board Association (TPCA), convened over 450 global PCB brands and featured 1,376 booths representing participants from Europe, the United States, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and more. The event was centred around key themes encompassing PCB and high-end PCB manufacturing, intelligent automation solutions, advanced production systems for surface mount technology (SMT) and electronic assembly, sustainable practices and green technology with a focus on achieving net-zero emissions, the introduction of high-quality new materials, consumables, chemicals, testing equipment, and software, as well as dry/wet process equipment, among other topics.

Within Taiwan's PCB equipment supply chain, it is evident that customers have varying approaches and timelines for reducing carbon emissions. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that IC substrate manufacturers closely linked to the semiconductor supply chain and primary PCB suppliers for companies like Apple will be among the first to experience the mounting pressure to adopt sustainable practices.

Industry experts reveal that Apple is implementing a comprehensive approach by insisting its suppliers integrate sustainability measures throughout their supply chains. Additionally, leading semiconductor foundry TSMC has launched educational programs through its Supplier Sustainability Academy, providing an accessible and free platform for sharing experiences in sustainability management, benefiting both suppliers and the general public.

Unimicron, a prominent substrate manufacturer in Taiwan, is a key supplier of ABF substrates for Apple's M1 and M2 chips, with Apple contributing over 10% of Unimicron's ABF business revenue. Unimicron has made substantial strides in enhancing energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy sources to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. They have also conducted thorough greenhouse gas inventories in accordance with ISO 14064 standards and sought third-party verification. Furthermore, they have set ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions by 25% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Unimicron remains steadfast in its commitment to process improvements, equipment efficiency, waste reduction, and the gradual integration of green energy and energy storage facilities to enhance power quality and manage peak power consumption.

Synpower has previously emphasized that the adoption of automation equipment is on the rise across various industries. As human-machine collaboration scenarios become more prevalent and the global manufacturing landscape undergoes shifts, manufacturing companies are diversifying their production bases to second or even third locations. This trend has created a strong demand for automation solutions.

In the realm of smart manufacturing, notable investments are being made by companies transitioning toward substrate manufacturing, particularly Zhen Ding. The challenge in achieving intelligent manufacturing in the PCB industry lies in the intricacy of the processes, which include drilling, exposure, electrical testing, visual inspections, line checks, and appearance assessments. The complete production process involves hundreds of stages.

As the world relentlessly pursues net-zero carbon emissions and automation equipment gains prominence, it is not only manufacturers who are taking action. Material and equipment supply chains are also proactively integrating energy-efficient and carbon reduction principles into their designs right from the outset of research and development.

Tuesday 24 October 2023

Janet Kang, Taipei; Vyra Wu, DIGITIMES Asia



The European Institute for the PCB Community

International Diary

2023

EIPC @ Productronica 2023

Stand B3-529

14-17 November

München, Germany

23rd EIPC Technical Snapshot Webinar

Registrations via www.eipc.org

December

2024

EIPC Winter Conference

Visit Schweizer Electronic AG

Schramberg/Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany

Tuesday 30 & Wednesday 31 January

EIPC Summer Conference

Visit ESTEC

Noordwijk, The Netherlands

Tuesday 4 & Wednesday 5 June