

CANADIAN ELECTRONICS

VOL. 23 No. 7

THE NEWS AND PRODUCTS JOURNAL FOR THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY



Live EDGE is now open for entries

Premier Farnell plc and its companies (Farnell, Newark, Premier Electronics, Farnell-Newark CPC, and MCM), announced that design entries are now being accepted at www.live-edge.com for the international design competition, Live EDGE – Electronic Design for the Global Environment.

The competition invites electronic design engineers, students and hobbyists to design products utilizing electronic components, which will positively impact the environment. Two prize packages will be offered in both the student and open/general competitions, which will run concurrently. The winner of each competition will receive a US\$25,000 cash award, plus a package of support services valued at an additional \$25,000 from experts in the fields of design consultancy, marketing, legal and commerce, to drive the winning designs towards production.

While submissions are accepted until January 31, 2009, entrants who submit completed designs early will automatically be entered into a monthly regional draw until the end of the year. One winner from each region will be selected each month from the Europe/Asia (Farnell), Americas (Newark), and Greater China (Premier Electronics) to receive US\$2,000. A total of \$18,000 will be awarded to help entrants move their designs forward.

“We are excited that the time to submit electronic designs for the 2008 Live EDGE competition is now here,” said Harriet Green, chief executive officer of Premier Farnell plc. “Once again Live EDGE will showcase the most innovative designs from the global electronic engineering community. Last year’s competition, the first of its kind, was a huge success and I look forward to seeing the new ideas from this year’s competition.”

Details on the challenge are located at www.live-edge.com Live EDGE Design Challenge groups are available on Facebook and LinkedIn.

www.premierfarnell.com

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Software ramps up design automation, cost savings

Canadian manufacturers and contractors need every advantage possible to stay competitive with the rest of the world. Yet many have been slow to reap the substantial savings available by switching to the latest electrical engineering design software that automates the design process and accelerates project work flows.

For German-based software developer EPLAN Software and Service, North America is a paradox. Many otherwise progressive companies have been reluctant to swap their old electrical AutoCAD setup, draftsmen and all, for a database-centric, intelligent drawing program like EPLAN despite the latter’s wealth of automation features that boost

the productivity of the individual designer or work group. General Motors of Detroit is already a convert, but some others may be intimidated by the learning curve that would accompany a move away from their AutoCAD program. Aside from providing new customers with training, EPLAN ad-

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dressed this concern in the latest release of its platform, launched at the recent Hanover Industry Fair. Each individual user can determine how much of the program they want to work with by choosing one of three user-proficiency modes (entry level, advanced, expert).

Three tiers of benefits

Customers who have moved to Electric P8 from AutoCAD programs report up to three levels of cost/productivity improvement. The most basic is a boost in program stability as well as freedom from having to proof output for errors. The powerful database will error check output against different criteria. The second and largest gain is in the myriad automation functions for design and development, reporting and list generation and project management. EPLAN automates virtually all manual, redundant and repetitive activities and its eCAD software can be integrated with

a company's PDM and ERP systems. The third level of savings is realized when adopting new mechatronic integration features that enhance the collaboration between the mechanical engineering department and other engineering disciplines participating in a project. Mechatronic integration is a work in progress, the Holy Grail for intelligent design. The goal is to enable collaborative workflows by linking the drawing technology of different engineering disciplines. Projects would be completed faster because the engineering is being done concurrently rather than sequentially.

EPLAN's platform already supports its flagship product, Electric P8, for electrical engineering, as well as EPLAN Fluid for hydraulics, EPLAN Cabinet for enclosure design and EPLAN PPE for process plant engineering. It has begun introducing mechatronic integration modules that link the platform with the world of the mechanical engineer. The first module, "Cabling for Autodesk Inventor", allows for virtual prototyping – the electrical engineer can import into Electric P8 the 3D model created by the mechanical engineer in Autodesk Inventor, and use the model to create

all the production documents for cabling early in the project, without waiting for construction of a physical prototype. While the mechanical engineer locates electrical components in the model, the electrical engineer focuses on the selection and interconnection of components.

More collaborative tools

Two more EPLAN mechatronic modules were launched at Hanover. "Piping" allows a fluid engineer to configure pipes and hoses more easily and quickly working with mechanical engineers. The full cost and productivity benefits of cross-functional designing are easy to quantify and capture in pneumatics and hydraulics because the length or the line arrangement can be defined in the computer without building a prototype. The "Collaboration" module links functions at the component level. The mechanical engineer creates a shopping cart in his program that the project planner can use when designing the automation components.

Among the collaborative tools being added with the latest upgrade of Electric P8 is a redlining capability that allows all

documentation to be converted into a PDF file for review and modification by other departments, or by customers, subcontractors or suppliers. Modifications can be re-imported as graphic elements into the original project.

Seamless engineering also requires accurate component and device data that can be incorporated during project planning. Looking up multiple catalogues and then importing the data manually is time-consuming. EPLAN's answer is Data Portal, through which users can identify components, even drag and drop them into schematics, and all associated documentation is automatically updated. The up-to-date and certified data is provided by a growing list of participating manufacturers including ABB, B&R, Harting, Igus, Pepperl & Fuchs, Phoenix Contact, Rittal, Rockwell, Schneider Electric, SEW and Siemens. Users can access macros of sub-circuits, assembly drawings, function templates for an intelligent device selection, international designations, preview images – even entire manuals.

www.eplancanada.com

Contract Manufacturing/ Electronics Assembly

TWO-PART CONDUCTIVE EPOXY

Conductive Compounds Inc. has announced its EP-600 silver-filled electrically conductive two-part epoxy adhesive for component mounting using dot dispense or screen printing processes. The EP-600 adhesive is designed to attach components, such as resistors, LEDs and grounding wires to metal and plastic substrates where solder or other conductive epoxies requiring high temperature curing cannot be used. It enables fast throughput manufacturing of PTF circuits built on temperature sensitive substrates, such as PET and for snap curing at low temperatures.



www.conductivecompounds.com



DC OUTPUT MODULES WITH FAULT PROTECTION

AutomationDirect's line of DirectLOGIC option modules includes fault-protected output modules designed for the DL205 PLCs. The F2-16TDxP 16-channel current output modules, available in sinking and sourcing configurations, feature 16 input points which are automatically assigned as fault status indicators for the corresponding outputs. Equipped with electronic short circuit protection, the modules detect missing external 24VDC, open load, overtemperature, and overcurrent load.

www.automationdirect.com

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