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Volume 2, Issue 1



Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest issue of DATA/News. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed of developments in the industry, as well as in our companies: Northtouch Canada and Comtree Inc.

Northtouch Canada Inc. and **Comtree Inc.** are leading electronics manufacturer's agents representing a wide array of world class assembly machines, test, programming, verification and diagnostic tools for the electronics industry.

To find out more about the companies we represent and their products, we invite you to visit our website and download our line card: www.comtreeinc.com/documents/ComtreeLinecard.pdf

If you do not wish to receive future issues of DATA/News, simply contact us and we will remove you from our distribution list: info@comtreeinc.com

If you find this newsletter useful, please forward it to your friends and colleagues or invite them to download an e-copy: www.comtreeinc.com/documents/DATANews2-1.pdf

Have a successful and profitable spring of 2006!

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.northtouch.com

www.comtreeinc.com

Benoit Giroux
Northtouch Canada Inc.

Ernesto Provenzano
Comtree Inc.

2006 Canadian High Technology Show:

www.reedexpo.ca/assembly

WIN!!

An IPOD 30G VIDEO

As a special appreciation for our customers, bring this Newsletter and a business card to the Comtree/Northtouch booth at CHTS for a chance to win an IPOD 30G Video!

Draw to be held at the conclusion of CHTS. Winner will be informed by phone on March 31



After a two year hiatus, CHTS and Assembly Canada are back! Running on March 29 and 30, this year's show promises to be more exciting than ever.

Canadian High Technology Show (CHTS) is Canada's only forum for industry professionals to assess and compare the latest products and services for electronics manufacturing.

Assembly Canada is Canada's only trade show dedicated exclusively to the function of assembling discrete parts into finished products.

These two events form the basis of the **Advanced Manufacturing Expo**, an event dedicated to helping you address your manufacturing challenges through:

- *innovation on the show floor*
- *educational sessions*
- *SMTA Toronto Academy and Process Certification*

Comtree and Northtouch will have a substantial presence this year with a large booth and plenty of equipment on display. Customers are always appreciative of our display and always make our booth one of the busiest at the show!

If you are budgeting to purchase any capital equipment this year, you will definitely want to visit Comtree/Northtouch at Booth 500.

On display this year:

Koh Young 3D Paste Inspection
Marantz N-Spec AOI
FocalSpot X-Ray Machine
Hirox Microscopes (inc. BGA)
Specnor Wave Machine
PVA Conformal Coating System
ASYS Laser Marker
 New **Selective Solder** Machine from **Zipatec**
 New **Dry Cabinet!**
Mydata Pick and Place Machine
Ekra Screen Printer
Cobar pastes, creams, and fluxes
KIC Thermal profilers
Alum-a-lift lifting systems
Cogiscan Material tracking systems
RMD LPA-1 Leadtracer
 and more!

A FREE entry ticket can be downloaded from our web-site at www.comtreeinc.com
 For further show information, please e-mail info@comtreeinc.com

Laser Marking vs. Labeling – The Thought Process.



ASYS Laser Marker ALS 003

Nowadays, it is standard in many industries, and particularly in electronics, to implement some form of a traceability program. The first question of the traceability implementation is how will the product be marked?

In electronics manufacturing, the most commonly used technique is the adhesive label. Other than hand marking, there are currently two other marking techniques in use: A laser marking process or an RFID tag system. RFID systems are only beginning to make a presence in this area. However, due to higher costs, they are not widely used as of yet.

Here, we will highlight some of the benefits and trade-offs between the adhesive labeling technique vs. laser marking.

The laser marking process has many advantages. It provides a tamper proof, permanent mark that is highly resistant to heat, extremely harsh environments, and to solvent chemicals. In addition, there is no added cost of labels or ink and a laser mark can usually be applied on a smaller footprint than a label.

Sounds great! Unfortunately, laser marking also has some significant disadvantages to consider. If a laser mark has been applied and it is not legible, or needs to be changed for any reason, it is impossible to rework it. So what can be done? Really, the only option is an alternate location, which is not always possible.

Ultimately the final decision will come down to price. The capital cost of the laser marker is usually higher than a labeling system. For the comparison we need to take into consideration not only the capital investment, but also the label and maintenance cost. So besides all the process advantages of laser marking, sometimes it will simply boil down to a financial decision based on annual numbers of marks that have to be applied.

ASYS is a leading manufacturer of marking systems, board handling systems, and board routing systems.



Interested in learning more about ASYS?

Please e-mail us at markus.wilkens@asys-group.com, or visit us on the web at



Save your Back with an Alum-a-Lift



Today, most people are familiar with correct lifting techniques. Nevertheless, back and spinal injury remains a serious concern in the workplace.

To reduce the possibility of injury in your shop, consider adding an Alum-A-Lift!

Starting with a series of standard frames, Alum-A-Lifts are custom configured to a customer's application to solve an ergonomic lifting problem and to assist in preventing back injury.

Consequently, Alum-A-Lifts effectively replace manual lifting, or heavy outdated lifts, with a light-weight, maneuverable aluminum lift that is compliant to NIOSH & OSHA requirements.

Interested in learning more about Alum-a-lift?

Please e-mail us at application@alum-a-lift.com or visit us on the web at www.alumalift.com

alum-a-lift inc
"The Back Saver"



Lifting Application Guide

Visit our webpage to download an Application Guide from Alum-A-Lift:

www.comtreeinc.com/documents/applicationguide.pdf

Is it really Lead Free?



The LPA-1 LeadTracer

Find Lead content in:

- Incoming inspection of components and pcbs
- WIP checking
- RMA'd product
- Solder and paste
- Inventory



Ask us how we
can help YOUR
company become
Lead-Free!

One of the toughest tasks facing electronic manufacturers today is the change-over from a tin-lead to a lead free process. If a company is required to manufacture both tin-lead and lead free in the same shop, the possibility of mis-labeling and the consequent contamination or misrepresentation can be catastrophic.

Unfortunately, a visual inspection is not enough. Particularly in the case of components that may contain lead in internal features.

Fortunately, there is now a solution from RMD Instruments of Waterdown, MD. RMD is a developer and manufacturer of a handheld unit to detect lead paint in buildings. RMD have now adapted this technology to the electronics industry and have developed the LPA-1 Leadtracer handheld lead detector for components and pcbs.

The LPA-1 LeadTracer™ is a state-of-the-art XRF spectrum analyzing system for the quantitative measurement of lead in any substrate. The LPA-1 Analyzer provides a fast, accurate measurement of lead content in as little as 2 to 4 seconds with a 95% confidence level, thereby assuring the highest level of productivity for an inspection.

The advanced design of the LeadTracer™ represents a new generation of XRF systems. By employing technological advances in the fields of electronics and microprocessors, and combining them with knowledge gained from experience with existing X-ray fluorescence technologies, LeadTracer™ can now make accurate assessments of lead levels in a fraction of the time previously needed. The result is the most effective lead inspection system available today.

The lead content in mg/cm^2 represents the actual amount of lead being measured regardless of the thickness, density, and location of the lead in a component. The mg/cm^2 is an absolute measurement that can be achieved by both laboratory and portable XRF methods.

The percent by weight (%W) or parts per million (PPM) measurements are relative measurements. These units represent the relative percentage of lead in a material without providing any indication for the actual amount of lead present. The PPM equivalent for a total lead content in a material or component is a function of elemental composition, thickness, and density of that material. The true PPM concentration should account for all of these factors and include the lead concentration from the entire depth rather than evaluation of the surface measurements of a few microns thickness.

LeadTracer™ utilizes a PDA based data acquisition platform that is specifically designed for the electronics industry. The PDA software converts the actual lead content in mg/cm^2 to PPM based on calibration values derived from actual electronic components and certified laboratory analyses. Furthermore, the LeadTracer™ software provides custom calibration capability for parts and components that may require their own calibration standards due to nature of the material used and their thickness.

The fast, accurate analysis capability of the LeadTracer™ is complemented with a data storage capacity of 4000 points. Measurement results in XML/ASCII may be transferred to a computer for creation of inspection reports in Excel or other preferred data management programs. An inspection report contains all inspection attributes such as date, stage of manufacturing, component type, lead content, etc.

With the LPA-1 LeadTracer™ Analyzer comes RMD's over 30 years of experience in research and development of radiation based instrumentation, and a committed and knowledgeable staff ready to assist you in maximizing the productivity of your inspection requirements.

Interested in learning more about RMD Lead Detection?

Please e-mail us at LPA@rmdinc.com, or visit us on the web at www.rmdinc.com

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News & Upcoming Events

2006 Shows and Seminars

Once again in 2006, Comtree and Northtouch will support the Canadian Electronics industry by exhibiting at 7 regional EPTECH shows. In addition to the exhibitions, we have planned informative seminars at most locations.

Boundary Scan technology will be presented in Calgary, Ottawa, Waterloo, Markham, Montreal, and Vancouver. Further information can be found at www.jtag.com

Thermal Profiling and solder paste qualification for lead free will also be presented in Markham. Further information can be found at

www.comtreeinc.com/whatsnew.html

We look forward to meeting you at one of these informative events throughout the year.

March 7, Eptech Calgary
March 9, Eptech Edmonton

March 29-30 CHTS –Toronto

April 4, Eptech – Ottawa
April 6, Eptech - Waterloo
April 20, Eptech - Markham
April 26, Eptech Montreal
June 22, Eptech Vancouver

August - Look for the next issue of DataNews

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