

## Moving forward

Alix Paultre, Editor in Chief

*In an environment of change, disruption favors the prepared*



Change is a key word in our industry. Technology has progressed so far so fast it is amazing to see how far we have come in such a relatively short time. We are swept downstream in the relentless river of development, buffeted by currents from so many quarters the pattern seems random. Disruptive technologies shove us in one direction as convergence tips us in another, making it difficult for a person to get beyond reaction mode. However, the seemingly-random streams do all travel between the same two banks. Those that keep their wits about them and look for the opportunities in the disruption will prevail.

The recent Society for Information Display Conference (held from May 18 to 23 at the Los Angeles Convention Center) was full of examples of both disruptive technology and convergence. From the latest commercialization efforts in Organic Light-Emitting Diode (OLED) technology from companies like Dupont ([www2.dupont.com/Displays/en\\_US](http://www2.dupont.com/Displays/en_US)) and Novaled ([www.novaled.com](http://www.novaled.com)) to the latest in LED backlights for LCDs from Global Lighting Technologies ([www.glthome.com](http://www.glthome.com)), the leading edge of display technology was on view. Highlights included round and heart-shaped LCDs from Toshiba ([www.toshiba.com](http://www.toshiba.com)) and NEC ([www.necdisplay.com](http://www.necdisplay.com)), demonstrating the ability to make non-rectangular screens, and bistable e-ink and cholesteric display technologies from E-Ink ([www.e-ink.com](http://www.e-ink.com)) and Kent Displays ([www.kentdisplays.com](http://www.kentdisplays.com) [1]).

Since the display is the primary user interface in most (if not all) electronic devices today, they are at the cutting edge of convergence, both in core technology as well as application. Multi-touch screens were everywhere, and SoG technology promises to integrate more and more driver circuitry on the display glass, eliminating the need for chip-on-glass construction. Flexible displays promise to put a screen on

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any surface, curved or flat.

The companies operating in this display rough-and-tumble must not only incorporate existing technologies into their products, but must also keep an eye on the radical technologies that are always threatening to pop out of the wings and change everything. Convergence adds complexity to the situation, as the disruptive technologies must be integrated into the next generation of products in harmony with the existing functionalities.

One way to embrace change is to make it a part of your company policy and turn it into an initiative. For example, Premier Farnell (the parent company of Newark) is holding the 2008 Live Edge contest to reward electronic designs that address global environmental issues. There is a separate student category to make for a more even playing field, and any design can be submitted. You can register your design at [www.live-edge.com](http://www.live-edge.com) between October 1, 2008 and January 31, 2009. Texas Instruments has created the Engibous Prize, \$150,000 in annual awards to engineering students for the most innovative electronics systems using analog semiconductors. The prize will be awarded in Asia, Europe and North America.

We are also addressing change, adding two full-time staffers and one Contributing editor. Jason Lomberg has been added as Technical Editor, and Chris Keuling as Associate Editor. (We actually share Jason with Uncle Sam because he is also an officer in the Signal Corps reserve.) In addition, ECN will be adding another Contributing Editor, Alfred Poor, to write a new Optoelectronics, Lighting, and Displays column called "On the Light Side", to begin in August.

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### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.kentdisplays.com/>