

Printed Electronics Enters Fast Growth Phase

Dr Peter Harrop, Chairman, IDTechEx



Printed electronics is associated with some orders, investments and acquisitions that are one hundred times as big as the largest two years ago. Now we can laminate solar power onto a large dirigible, for example, and Northrop Grumman in the USA has just landed an order for \$517 million to make one for surveillance from the upper atmosphere that is based on flexible photovoltaics. Delivery will be in 2012. Boeing in the USA has won \$89 million in funding from the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency DARPA for the second phase of the Vulture long-endurance unmanned aerial system UAS program made possible by flexible photovoltaics.

After more than ten years Plastic Logic has yet to launch a product but it has just gained commitment of what it describes as nearly "one billion dollars in total". Plastic Logic started as an IP company in printed transistors then changed strategy to try to launch a thin, flexible printed e-reader. However, technical problems and the sweeping success of the Amazon Kindle™ and Apple I-Pad™ put that on hold. However, the enabling technology of Plastic Logic remains very exciting for a host of potential uses.

The Russian Corporation of Nanotechnologies (RUSNANO) and Plastic Logic have just finalized details of RUSNANO's investment in the company. The new investment, which will total \$700 million in funds, includes building the world's largest volume production factory for Plastic Logic's next-generation plastic displays in Zelenograd, and aims to establish a commercial plastic electronics industry in Russia.

Plastic Logic has received an initial investment package of \$300 million. Under the final agreement, RUSNANO is providing an initial investment of \$150 million into the equity of Plastic Logic. Plastic Logic's lead investor, Oak Investment Partners, a multi-stage venture capital firm, is investing an additional \$50 million as part of the project investment plan. In addition to the equity investments, RUSNANO will provide partial guarantees for debt financing in the amount of \$100 million.

When it comes to acquisitions, Heraeus of Germany has recently bought the large company H.C.Starck of Germany, which makes the archetypal conductive polymer ink PEDOT:PSS. Two years ago, there were few orders, investments or acquisitions

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beyond a few million dollars in size in activities related to printed electronics. Little wonder that the only global series of events on printed electronics, the IDTechEx "Printed Electronics and Photovoltaics" events, have been growing very rapidly, totally unaffected by the recession.

The annual IDTechEx Printed Electronics Europe 2011 event will be held in Dusseldorf, Germany, on 5 - 6 April. It is Europe's largest event on the topic and will move the topic forward by covering perspectives from many new end users, and the latest progress with the technology. Registration is now open - for more details please visit www.IDTechEx.com/Dusseldorf. The event features presentations from global companies such as Mars, JCDecaux, Nokia, Samsung, Panasonic, Applied Materials, Henkel and many more.

For information on Printed Electronics Europe 2011 please contact Cara Harrington at c.harrington@IDTechEx.com [1].

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