element14 invites visitors to Electronica to convert their waste electronic devices and components into an artistic sculpture

element14, Premier Farnell's innovative online technology resource and community for electronic design engineers, and a leading authority on environmental legislation in the electronics industry, announces it will build a sculpture from electronics waste in the "Atrium at the entrance East" at Electronica, 9 – 12 November 2010 in Germany. All attendees to Electronica are encouraged to donate an old electronic device, component or small piece of electronics hardware to aid in the building of the sculpture. Renowned German artist Birgit Werres will build the sculpture over the four day event. Birgit is from Stommeln, Germany and studied at the Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf under Irmin Kamp and Tony Cragg, well known in the arts world as accomplished artists and sculptors.

The sculpture will act as a reminder and raise awareness throughout the show about the need to tackle the dangers resulting from unregulated recycling of electronic waste in developing countries.

One of the many dangers of recycling is that, in order to extract valuable metals such as gold, silver, copper and aluminium, electronic waste is heated over open fires and the stripping of cables and PCBs in acid baths is commonplace. This can release arsenic, chromium, lead, mercury and other toxins directly into the atmosphere, with significant impact on both the health of those recycling the waste and the local environment. Research has shown that regular handling of electronic waste and inhalation of toxic fumes can result in damage to the brain, the nervous system, the lungs and kidneys and is also linked to certain types of cancer.

"As an industry we have a responsibility to do something to address the problems associated with unregulated recycling of waste, especially in developing countries," said Harriet Green, CEO of Premier Farnell. "As an industry leader in electronics legislation and through the introduction of a state-of-the-art legislation portal on element14, and our award winning bio-packaging we have demonstrated our commitment to supporting design engineers the world over. We hope that the sculpture we are going to build at Electronica will act as a reminder to all who are involved in the electronics industry, of the need to regulate the recycling of electronic waste and make it a global priority."

"It is estimated that up to 50 million tonnes of e-waste is discarded every year, with around 70% reaching Africa, China and India. Of this, as much as 90% ends up with recyclers that observe no environmental or health standards," said Gary Nevison, Premier Farnell's Head of Legislation. "In India alone, we believe that up to five million people – many of them children and the majority with little or no protection are involved in this harmful trade. Millions more are affected in Africa and China."

element14 recognises the enormous challenge that design engineers face in keeping abreast of the vast amount of environmental legislation from a plethora of sources globally. The element14 online community, built specifically for electronic design engineers, offers a one stop source for the very latest information from all sources. The community wants to support engineers at every stage of the design cycle from concept to production by offering a combination of community, content and a fully developed industry legislation portal, containing guides to industry relevant legislation such as RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances), WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment), REACH, ErP/Eco-Design and many more, all available for immediate download at no charge.

element14 is offering the first 100 visitors who bring their waste product to their stand in Hall A5 -stand 558, a chance to win a TI Beagleboard. Please visit “Atrium at the entrance East” where the sculpture will be built between 9 - 12 November 2010.

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