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Press release

LOPEC 2023

Green electronics at LOPEC 2023: “We help the industry make the right decisions”

LOPEC, the world's leading trade fair and conference for flexible, organic and printed electronics, is becoming a meeting place for sustainability. From February 28 to March 2, innovations from the world of green electronics will be on display at Messe München's ICM. The topic is also increasingly coming into focus on the conference agenda, as Dr. Chloé Bois, General Manager of the Printability and Graphic Communications Institute in Québec, Canada, and Vice Chair North America of the OE-A Board, emphasizes. OE-A (Organic and Printed Electronics Association) is the co-organizer of LOPEC. In this interview, she talks about the challenges of green and printed electronics.

As part of the LOPEC Conference, you will give a Short Course on the circular economy. How recyclable or reusable are printed electronics already?

There are so many different concepts. Printed electronics seems to be a good option, but we always have to do a lifecycle analysis. Although this tool has its flaws, it can support decision-making processes and limit green washing. Imagine you have a cardboard box with a smart label that measures the temperature. Do we want that label to be paper or plastic based? In a project with an expert in cellulose fiber recovery, we demonstrated that a plastic label gave better results in terms of the quality of the fibers recovered from the cardboard. And in that use case the plastic label also reduced water waste contamination during recycling. But each use case is different, and each requires specific analysis. Be ready for some surprises!

Claudia Grzelke
PR Manager
Tel. +49 89 949-21498
claudia.grzelke@messe-muenchen.de

OE-A Press Contact
Isabella Treser
Press & Public Relations
Tel. +49 69 6603 1896
isabella.treser@oe-a.org

Messe München GmbH
Messegelände
81823 München
Germany
messe-muenchen.de

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Which development in green electronics has impressed you the most in the past few years?

It's not one specific result but the high level of interdisciplinarity and interaction. People have understood that we all need to sit around the same table to tackle the challenges. We have a lot of amazing projects, and students are also learning that they need to see the bigger picture. Otherwise, we do amazing science but fail to find the amazing solutions for society that we need right now.

What do you expect from LOPEC?

What I see right now is that sustainability is in almost every LOPEC presentation. I hope that we will be able to distinguish between greenwashing and good solutions that really provide something beneficial today and in the near future. It is very important to do the right thing. We help the industry make the right decisions.

If you look at the various industries, where do you see the greatest potential for printed green electronics?

In my opinion, we need to focus on products with a very short lifespan. All of us are already creating huge amounts of e-waste every day, so imagine what will happen if the Internet of Things becomes as ubiquitous as we are aiming for it to be! I have used just one smartphone for several years and my car for a decade, but every day I consume numerous packages, some without being aware of it since they are tertiary packaging from the supply chain. Even if we put electronics on only a few of them, everyone is generating lots of e-waste every day. In addition, we should also look at those things that are used heavily in the supply chain and at everything that is related to the security and traceability of products like food or drugs.

Industries such as automotive or consumer electronics already use printed electronics for products with a long lifespan. What should they focus on?

These sectors can also achieve huge direct environmental benefits with printed electronics, for example, by lowering the energy consumption of their products thanks to the low weight of printed electronics. They should use the concepts of

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circularity to optimize the sorting of components and materials, and to favor urban mining.

What is your strategy to convince others of the benefits of printed electronics?

Printed electronics is a deep tech with a very long sales cycle. So, I take a long, long time, even years to raise awareness of the potential of printed electronics among my customers. I show them demonstrators and tell them to start with something small that will quickly have a big impact and be beneficial not only for their customers but also for their customers' customers and end users. Let's try very, very small solutions and you will see if the market is ready, if your customer is willing to use it, and if you are able to really produce it. I call that the quick wins. Communication and an open dialogue with key stake holders, markets, regulators, and wider society is another important factor. The Working Group Sustainability within OE-A aims to identify and understand the sustainability benefits of flexible, organic and printed electronics, emphasizing its contribution to a sustainable future. It provides information, guidelines, and methodologies to understand sustainability of PE products and processes better.

Could you give us an example?

Sure – in one of our biggest projects we are working together with a cardboard company on smart labels. Their champion customer is a food producer that sells its products to a big retailer in Asia. In addition to the technical achievements, the project tightened the relationship between supplier and customer. That way, they had a return on their time invested before they even had the product ready. That is also what LOPEC offers: Stakeholders along the entire value chain of printed electronics will meet and jointly discuss solutions for the challenges of the future.

You can find this press release including images to download at

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LOPEC

LOPEC (Large-area, Organic & Printed Electronics Convention) is the world's leading event for printed electronics. The combination of exhibition and conference covers the complexity and dynamism of this young industry perfectly. LOPEC is organized jointly by the OE-A (Organic and Printed Electronics Association) and Messe München GmbH. The next event will take place from February 28 to March 2, 2023, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München.

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Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies.

Every year, about 50,000 exhibitors and around 3 million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München, the Conference Center Nord and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München, and also abroad.

Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and Vietnam. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia and South America, and with around 70 representations abroad for more than 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.

OE-A

The OE-A (Organic and Printed Electronics Association) is the world's leading industrial association for flexible, organic and printed electronics. It represents the entire value chain of this industry. Its members are world-leading companies and institutions, from research and development institutes to, mechanical engineers and material manufacturers to producers and end users. Many more than 200 companies from Europe, Asia, North America, and Africa work together in the OE-A to further advance the development of a competitive infrastructure for the production of flexible and printed electronics. OE-A is an international working group within VDMA.

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