

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innov-X Responds to International Pb-Free Regulations Pushing Electronics Manufacturers to Find Non-toxic Replacements

BOSTON, MA, Jan 11, 2005, Manufacturers are now faced with taking full responsibility for instituting Pb-free manufacturing processes and for developing non-toxic, high-performance replacements.

Don Sackett, Innov-X Systems President, offers a hand-held tool for testing electronics components as well as for developing non-toxic high-performance replacement materials with worldwide applicability. "Simple, proven tools are available for manufacturers and governments to test these materials" conveys Sackett. "The Innov-X Portable Point-and-Shoot Tube-based XRF Analyzer provides a fast, confident non-destructive screening tool of electronic parts, components and assembled products. It is used for monitoring toxic metal levels, for compliance verification, for on-site QC, and for documented traceability."

The Innov-X analyzer was developed as a universal analysis tool, being x-ray tube-based, engineered around a PDA and may be optimized for a wide variety of materials applications including plastics, alloys, soil, paints, glass, etc.

Finding Replacements Can Cause Significant Problems

Much research is being focused on replacements for lead solder. Although lead has been used extensively in soldering circuit boards for years, its health hazards coupled with the extensive disposal of outdated electronic equipment has caused world governments to reduce or eliminate lead's use in electronics. This has increased the use of pure tin for solder and coatings, creating problems of "tin-whiskering". Tin can grow "whiskers", or filamentary corrosion, which can short out electronics. Not only is this a commercial problem, tin "whiskers" that could end up in medical devices, satellites, missiles and other military or security-sensitive equipment can cause problems that are far reaching. Consequently, tin "whiskers" also pose safety, reliability and potential liability threats. Other *pure* and lead-free solder alloy substitutes, such as Silver, Copper, Zinc, Bismuth, Indium, Antimony, and Cadmium, are also potential causes of failure for electronic equipment. "New lead-free solder alloys and coatings must be developed, tested and monitored. The Innov-X Analyzer is ideal for these applications" continues Sackett.

Worldwide Regulatory Drivers

Aside from obvious production and liability costs, it will be necessary for manufacturers to verify compliance with existing and emerging

Environmental Directives. The primary focus for a scheduled phase-out of lead and other toxic materials in electronic product manufacture are focused on commercial use in high population densities such as Japan and the EU. As those regions are doing, the U.S. will specify maximum allowable concentrations, but the U.S. is in the stage of reporting levels as opposed to completely banning these materials. Directives include, but are not limited to, RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances), WEEE (Waste Electrical/Electronic Equipment), and ELV (End of Life Vehicles Directive). Military electronic equipment is currently exempt from the directives; however, the U.S. Joint Group on Pollution Prevention (JG-PP) which includes major aerospace, electronic, military, solder and coating manufacturers and other defense contractors will feel the effects of these directives as the military is a large market for electronic products. It would not be commercially feasible for manufacturers to track and repair lead-containing materials for the military vs. lead-free materials for commercial use electronics. "Consequently," adds Sackett, "the military and its vendors have a vested interest in thoroughly testing the new metals and alloys for solder and coatings." The Electronic Industries Association (EIA) is proactively developing programs to reduce the environmental impacts of manufacturing from design to end of life, but it is likely that all governments will eventually be enacting legislation and regulations for this industry.

About Innov-X Systems

Innov-X Systems is an energetic new force in the portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) industry. Their systems perform fast, accurate chemical analysis in seconds to identify, differentiate and quantify most materials from the periodic table of elements. Founded in 2001, they pioneered portable XRF instrumentation using a miniature x-ray tube rather than radioactive isotopes. They utilize pocket PC technology and software to enable the next generation of high performance XRF devices with GPS, multiple language display and wireless communication.

With R&D and manufacturing facilities in the U.S., Innov-X has offices in Europe (the Netherlands), Africa (Zambia), and Asia (Hong Kong). They maintain sales and service alliances in Canada, the Middle East, South America and worldwide.

More company information is available at <http://www.innov-xsys.com>.

Photo's available at www.innov-xsys.com/pressroom

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