Digi-Key to distribute ITT Cannon products worldwide

SANTA ANA, CA – ITT Interconnect Solutions, a global manufacturer and supplier of connectors, interconnects, and cable assemblies, and electronic components distributor Digi-Key Corp., have entered into an agreement in which Digi-Key will distribute ITT Cannon products to customers worldwide.

Products from ITT Cannon are now available for purchase on Digi-Key's global websites and will be featured in future print and online catalogs. Providing one of the largest connector product offerings in the industry, ITT Cannon connectors are defined by a legacy of nearly a century of interconnect science.

"We at Digi-Key are very pleased to announce this new partnership with ITT Cannon," said Jeff Shafer, Digi-Key vice president, interconnect, passive, and electromechanical products. "ITT Cannon's commitment to innovative, quality products is a good match for Digi-Key's goal of providing our customers with superior service, which includes product selection and availability, on-time delivery, and responsiveness."

"Digi-Key is a valuable addition to ITT Cannon's sales channel as we continue our strategy of providing innovative interconnect solutions into new and exciting applications. We look forward to supporting our customers thru the comprehensive Digi-Key sales and marketing infrastructure," said James Herman, VP of Global Sales at ITT Interconnect Solutions."

www.ittcannon.com www.digikey.ca

Recycling plant takes aim at our old CRTs

Sims Recycling Solutions Canada has announced its newest electronics recycling facility, located in Mississauga, ON. The 287,000 ft^2 facility is home to the most advanced technology that Sims Recycling Solutions (www.simsrecycling.com) has to offer for the recycling of end of life electronics, also known as waste electronics and electrical equipment (WEEE) or e-waste.

The three-phase project included a fully mechanized cathode ray tube (CRT) recycling process that yields commodity grades of leaded and non-leaded glass from monitors and televisions; better metals recycling technologies; and the newest plastic separation technology allowing for closed loop recycling of plastics.

The net result of this multi-million dollar investment provides higher recycling rates while maintaining the strict environmental and safety standards most commonly associated with Sims Recycling Solutions. "The volume of WEEE requiring processing in Ontario alone has increased from a stricly voluntary market to over 42,000 metric tonnes per year forecast driven by regulation" said Cindy Coutts, president of Sims Recycling Solutions Canada.

Worker in new Sims CRT recycling plant strips out printed circuit boards. Behind him in the warehouse are hundreds of skids with CRT waste.

With a receiving capacity in excess of 100,000 mt per year, the new site will provide electronics recycling services to residential consumers, businesses, governments and provincial programs throughout Canada.

The Canadian operation is currently ISO 14001:2004, OHSAS 18001:2007, RCMP and Controlled Goods Approved, EPSC RVQP and Responsible Recycling (R2) Practices certified.

Taking license

Recipes for product secrecy

What is the secret of Coca-Cola's great taste? The recipe for this iconic soft drink has been carefully guarded for over a century. Given the ubiquity of this drink, how is it that the formula could have remained hidden for so long?

There are tales, possibly apocryphal, of labels removed from containers, requiring ingredients to be identified by sight and smell; invoices from ingredient suppliers destroyed to prevent rivals from reverse-engineering the formula; prohibitions against writing down the recipe; written copies stored only in bank vaults; and, perhaps most intriguingly, a policy that only two individuals at any time were privy to the entire recipe.

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LESSONS FOR ENGINEERS IN THE STORY OF COCA-COLA

Casual observers may – incorrectly – assume that the makers of Coca-Cola also hold a patent for the recipe. Patents can be powerful tools, after all. But patents, by virtue of the time-limited monopoly they confer, require their subject matter to be publicly known. In contrast, secret recipes such as that for Coca-Cola belong to an entirely different class of intellectual property: trade secrets.

Although there are differing definitions, depending on jurisdiction, a trade secret can be characterized as information that is not generally known and that is valuable because it is not generally known. Moreover, owners of trade secrets must make reasonable efforts to protect the information.

There is no registration system for trade secrets. In general, any information that meets the above criteria can form the basis of a trade secret. Some common examples include formulas and recipes, schematics, and compilations of information (such as customer lists). Much of the information encountered in daily practice by an electrical or electronic engineer can also be a trade secret.

The principle factor is the secrecy of the information. Unlike the protection available to patent holders, there is no accompanying right of a trade secret owner to prevent others from fairly discovering or learning the information. Indeed, defendants in a trade secrets case can escape liability by establishing that they discovered the information independently.

However, the law may offer protection to parties whose trade secrets have been unfairly revealed or stolen. In particular, courts can provide various forms of relief if the secret information has been disclosed improperly to a third party, and the third party is aware that the information should not have been disclosed. In particular, owners of trade secrets can seek relief if their secret information was revealed through theft, bribery, misrepresentation, breach of a duty to maintain secrecy (e.g., under a confidentiality agreement), espionage or other such means.

Somewhat ironically, the lack of formal requirements concerning the establishment of a trade secret can make it difficult to make a claim at a later date. Accordingly, companies should be pro-active both in identifying appropriate parts of their current technologies, and in establishing policies and procedures to safeguard them. A documented paper trail can be critical if a trade secrets case is ever launched.

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