

Flexible display market to reach US\$2.8 billion by 2013, says iSuppli

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Flexible displays are playing an increasingly important role in the global high-tech industry, serving as the crucial enabling technology for a new generation of portable devices designed to combine mobility with compelling user interfaces. Due to the arrival of Polymer Vision's Radius pocket-sized e-reader and other such products, iSuppli forecasts the total flexible display market will reach US\$2.8 billion by 2013, a 35-times expansion from about US\$80 million in 2007.

Rising shipments of flexible displays are being enabled by the establishment of several batch and roll-to-roll manufacturing facilities.

"Flexible displays are intuitively appealing to end users and product designers because of their ruggedness, thinness, light weight and novelty," said Jennifer Colegrove, senior analyst for emerging displays at iSuppli. "Such displays also offer manufacturers the potential for inexpensive fabrication because they can be made using new printing methods or roll-to-roll processing. Furthermore, flexible displays have the advantage of easy and relatively inexpensive shipping and safety handling compared to conventional rigid screens. When flexible displays break, they don't have any sharp edges that can cause injuries or further damage."

Because of these attributes, flexible displays were on center stage at the Society for Information Display (SID) 2008 International Symposium, Seminar and Exhibition, held in May in Los Angeles.

South Korean manufacturer LG Display and its US partner Universal Display demonstrated their 4-inch flexible AMOLED at the show. The display features QVGA (320×240) resolution, with a metal foil backplane substrate.

E-Ink showcased a variety of flexible electrophoretic bi-stable displays, from simple direct drive screens for wristwatches, to beautifully-designed mobile-phone cover displays, to active matrix high resolution displays for e-book/mobile phones, such as those used in Polymer Vision's Radius.

Polymer Vision demonstrated its soon-to-be-in-the-market Radius, which features a foldable 5-inch monochrome electrophoretic display. The company also announced the color version prototype at 65,000 color and 127ppi resolution.

Prime View International (PVI) demonstrated its Flexi-e, an active matrix electrophoretic display on polyimide substrate. SiPix, Kent Displays and Bridgestone also showed a number of flexible displays.

At the SID event, there also were more than a dozen presentations on flexible displays, including from Flexible Display Center at Arizona State University, Hewlett Packard (HP), Dai Nippon Printing (DNP), Nippon Steel and Honeywell.

