

Press release

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Formnext Connect succeeds as the digital heart of the international AM industry

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From 10-12 November 2020, Formnext Connect demonstrated its credentials as the international, digital hub of the AM world, highlighting, even in challenging times, the continuing importance of the world's leading exhibition for the AM industry and the next generation of industrial production.

Formnext Connect attracted 203 exhibitors with about 2200 representatives, and showcased 1412 products. 8541 active participants from more than 100 nations (1/3 national, 2/3 international) made great use of the intelligent and modern matchmaking function, which managed to generate more than 450000 recommendations for products and other participants. Further, 23311 new contacts and 4733 business meetings in the form of video calls were enabled. The 221 lectures and presentations of the high-profile program of stage events and sessions were watched by 45000 spectators. Here, experts from all over the world discussed current and future trends, developments and applications in various webinars and discussion panels.

With international product launches, amongst them numerous new materials, a SLM machine with 12 lasers as well as post-processing solutions for finishing, de-powdering and curing and exciting new developments on show, Formnext Connect demonstrated that the AM industry remains highly innovative, even in this year of corona, and urgently needs an international platform for business opportunities and networking. "The newly developed digital format of Formnext Connect has enabled us to meet the demand from the AM community and target industries for dialog, business, and innovation," commented Sascha F. Wenzler, Vice President Formnext at Mesago Messe Frankfurt GmbH. "Formnext has thus demonstrated that, even in a purely digital format, it is indispensable as a globally important catalyst for the technological and economic development of this future-oriented industry."

Wide-ranging content program

In the content program, Formnext Connect and the TCT Conference @ Formnext presented current trends and significant innovations from the world of AM, and gave a detailed insight into technological advances. In addition, the AI-supported matchmaking platform matched exhibitors with participants throughout. An ever-present accompaniment to Formnext Connect was the varied program from the Additive Manufacturing Capital Studio with its high-caliber guests. This was broadcast on the main stage

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in consideration of different time zones, and presented a varied program with a number of high-profile names. There were discussion panels among technology experts from the various exhibitors as well as interviews with representatives from various user industries, including automotive, aerospace, construction, mechanical engineering, medicine, and tool and mold making.

Dayle Alexander and Oluseun Taiwo (Virgin Orbit), Dr. Eliana Fu (Relativity Space), Melissa Orme (Boeing) and Hauke Schultz (Airbus), for example, reported on AM components in aircraft construction as well as an entirely 3D-printed rocket.

Automotive applications were discussed in presentations by Martin Bock (Audi), Dr. Martin Goede (Volkswagen), Dr. Martin Hillebrecht (EDAG), Carsten Merklein (Schaeffler), and Markus Schnell (Continental). AM is no longer confined only to prototyping; it is already being employed in live production environments and responding to challenges relating to cost efficiency, speed, and production volume.

Other speakers included Satoshi Abe (Panasonic), Franz Bosbach (KSB), Stephen Fitzpatrick (National Manufacturing Institute Scotland), Sherry Handel (AMGTA), Güngör Kara (Ottobock), Dr. Cora Lüders-Theuerkauf (Medical goes Additive), Gerret Lukas (RWTH Aachen), Prof. Dr. Jens Telgkamp (HAW), Douglas Woods (AMT), and many more.

The participants also received valuable first-hand information on major markets including Israel, Japan, Russia, and the United States, and new markets such as the partner country China.

A number of partner organizations were also on hand to share their in-depth knowledge. The purmundus challenge and the winners of the Start-up Challenge provided a glimpse of the future of 3D and 4D printing as well as future business opportunities. Throughout the event, Discover3Dprinting seminars, which were presented in cooperation with ACAM (Aachen Center for Additive Manufacturing), provided tips and information for newcomers to industrial 3D printing. Over the three days of the event, Formnext's conceptual sponsor, the Additive Manufacturing Association within the VDMA e.V., also held a series of lectures looking at the transition from cottage industry to mass production. For the second time, the U.S. Commercial Service hosted the AM Standards Forum, and the BE-AM Symposium, which was held in cooperation with TU Darmstadt, focused on AM in the architecture and construction industry.

Visitors and exhibitors alike were impressed by the business opportunities showcased and the wide-ranging digital program:

"The best show in additive manufacturing made a good start in the digital world. In a time where in-the-cloud interaction is still better than nothing, the team behind the Formnext was able to deliver value with unprecedented reliability. The interaction with others, while virtual, has been as normal as a typical video call. Attendees have been able to

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experience a main stage with live sessions, exhibits, meeting rooms and collaborative spaces—everything they might have experienced at the in-person show.”

Gianluca Mattaroccia Engineering Fellow, The Estee Lauder Companies

I really enjoyed the virtual Formnext this year! It was great to be able to “meet” and connect with people from all over the world. I also enjoyed speaking at Formnext Connect on a great subject matter alongside other great guests and a fantastic host. Thanks to the team for inviting me and making this year’s conference a reality!

Dr. Eliana Fu, Senior Engineer, Relativity Space

“Today, digitization is a key driver for industrial, economic and social development. With industrial 3D printing, EOS enables digital, more decentralized production resulting in more flexible supply chains. With Formnext Connect this year, Mesago has proved that trade fairs also work digitally. It was an exciting virtual journey for all of us, however, at the same time we’re looking forward to seeing you again in person in Frankfurt next year.”

Marie Langer, CEO, EOS

“Unusual times call for unusual measures. The current global pandemic means that restrictions and changes are taking place everywhere, including at Formnext. However, Formnext has not allowed itself to be restricted; it has created a completely new format - the virtual Formnext Connect! We, as exhibitors at Metalpine, are delighted about this future-oriented and innovative way of successfully managing trade fairs, even in times of global crisis.”

Florian Gollenz, Marketing Manager, Metalpine

For Sascha F. Wenzler, the digital format of Formnext Connect proved a success and will also play a role in future trade fair formats. “Born out of necessity due to the worldwide corona restrictions, Formnext Connect has proven itself as a digital platform and will continue to form an important part of future exhibitions.” That being said, Wenzler is of the firm belief that it can never make up for the direct contact and personal interaction of a physical event. “That is why we look forward to future editions of Formnext, which we hope will once again can be held in person, so that we may bring the vibrant Formnext atmosphere, which we are all familiar from previous years back to the Frankfurt show floor.” In view of the positive experiences from Formnext Connect, however, the digital component is to be further developed for the future.

Following the conclusion of the live Formnext Connect program, the platform will continue to be accessible until 31 December 2020 and will still offer opportunities to engage with others via text-chat as well as a wealth of on-demand content.

Formnext 2021 is scheduled to return to Frankfurt am Main from 16 to 19 November 2021.

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Background information on Formnext

Formnext is the leading trade fair for Additive Manufacturing and the next generation of intelligent manufacturing solutions. It focuses on the efficient realization of parts and products, from their design to serial production. Formnext shows the future of innovative manufacturing. Formnext is organized by Mesago Messe Frankfurt GmbH. (formnext.com)

About Mesago Messe Frankfurt

Mesago, founded in 1982 and located in Stuttgart, specializes in exhibitions and conferences on various topics of technology. The company belongs to the Messe Frankfurt Group. Mesago operates internationally and is not tied to a specific venue. With 160 members of staff Mesago organizes events for the benefit of more than 3,300 exhibitors and over 110,000 trade visitors, conference delegates and speakers from all over the world. Numerous trade associations, publishing houses, scientific institutes and universities work with Mesago closely as advisers, co-organizers and partners. (mesago.com)

Background information on Messe Frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With more than 2,600 employees* at 30 locations, the company generates annual sales of around €733 million*. We have close ties with our industry sectors and serve our customers' business interests efficiently within the framework of our Fairs & Events, Locations and Services business fields. One of the Group's key USPs is its closely knit global sales network, which extends throughout the world. Our comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services. Headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com

*preliminary figures 2019.

Background information on TCT (Content Partner)

Established in 1992, TCT Group's mission is to accelerate design-to-manufacturing innovation. Through global trade shows, conferences, magazines, websites and digital products TCT delivers business-critical insights on the technologies that help manufacturers make better products, more quickly and cost-effectively. Through the TCT Awards TCT celebrates the most innovative products and applications across the design-to-manufacturing process chain. The TCT Group is owned by Rapid News Publications Ltd, part of Rapid News Group. (thetctgroup.com)

Background information on the Working Group Additive Manufacturing (Honorary Sponsor)

Within the Working Group Additive Manufacturing, about 150 companies and research institutes collaborate under the direction of the German industry federation VDMA. Here, plant engineers; component and material suppliers; industrial companies that work with metals and plastics; service providers in software, manufacturing, and processing; and numerous researchers all work toward the same goal: the industrialization of additive manufacturing techniques. (am.vdma.org)