

Conitiv Synchron - a start-up with a gift for languages



Universally acclaimed, this software application for memorizing language vocabulary is slated to be developed for other uses.

Just one short year after its creation at the Nancy-Brabois Science and Technology Park, Conitiv Synchron is a true success story. The winner of the Entreprenre and 3iLorraine regional innovation awards, this young company, which employs two computer engineers and a production manager, has also been honored with the French Ministry of Research's 2005 prize for innovative technologies in the creation/development category.

Behind the firm's success lies Lexphaser, a software application for learning and memorizing foreign language vocabulary. "After two years of research and

development, blending cognitive sciences and information technology, we invented this software which helps users memorize vocabulary and is a complement to the traditional approach to language learning," explains Xavier Lefebvre, manager of Conitiv Synchron and a graduate of Nancy's National Graduate Institute for Industrial Systems Engineering. The results are spectacular: in approximately ten hours, 500 words can be memorized.

Available in six languages (French, English, German, Dutch, Spanish and Italian), Lexphaser comes in both standard and customized versions,

depending on user needs. "Whether it is everyday vocabulary or more specialized terminology, we tailor the product to specific requirements and various sectors, such as tourism, banking, insurance, agribusiness, textiles and others. We are also developing an online version of the software and working on other applications, such as memorizing product catalogs, photo galleries and more. We will also be offering a version of the software for the general public."

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

SAM, a subsidiary of Italy's RIVA group, based in Neuves-Maisons and specializing in the production and transformation of metals, is continuing its expansion. After investing in continuous casting and in a new metalworks crane, SAM is once again upgrading its manufacturing plant and boosting its production capacity by 50%, to 1.3 million tons per year.

Nancy firm **Pharmagest Inter@ctive**, the French leader in pharmacy IT services (with a 43% market share in France and 80% market share in the Lorraine region), has set its sights on the European market. Founded twenty years ago, Pharmagest has just opened a subsidiary in Belgium, a country with 5,000 pharmacies that offers high growth potential for the firm's software solutions.

Cristal Laser located in Messein on the outskirts of Nancy, is France's only producer of synthetic crystals, a specialty with applications

in the medical, industrial and defense fields. 80 % of its sales already coming from export markets (mostly in the United States), the firm has decided to break into the Japanese and Chinese markets. In order to become more competitive, Cristal Laser, which employs a staff of 14, will soon be investing in a research center.

Mathieu-Yno, a manufacturer of street sweepers and cleaners based in Toul, is taking a keen interest in the Chinese market. After selling ten machines to the city of Urumqi, the company, with 90 employees and sales of 25 million euros in 2004, has just been awarded a contract with the city of Beijing, which is preparing to host the 2008 Summer Olympics.

Gris Découpage, located in Lesménils, near Pont-à-Mousson, has recently taken over the Saint-Etienne firm MGE and its Slovak subsidiary Motokom. This acquisition will enable

the firm to expand operations in Central and Eastern Europe and offer a wider range of services. Gris Découpage specializes in the production of die-cut washers and mechanical components, while MGE is in the die cutting and assembly business.

The **Impulse projet**, coordinated in Nancy by the National Polytechnic Institute of Lorraine and the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), explores the microtechnologies that will help invent the chemical factories of the future. The aim: cleaner, safer production of chemical products. With 10.5 million euros in subsidies from the European Union, Impulse is a consortium of 20 partners from eight countries, including universities, public research centers and leaders in European industry such as GlaxoSmithKline (the world's number two pharmaceuticals firm), Degussa (the world leader in specialty chemicals), Procter & Gamble and Siemens.

Professional assistance

The Greater Nancy Development Agency (ADUAN) can provide expert assistance for your business projects. The ADUAN team can advise you on:

- all issues related to your business project
- the search for appropriate locations for your project
- making contact with various partners (technical, financial and business specialists)



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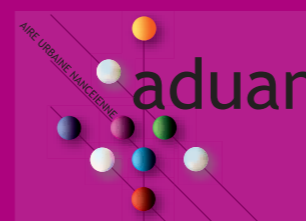
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INNOVATION

Nancy hones its "nano" skills

- Nanoscience and nanotechnology are opening immense prospects for research and industry. In Nancy, laboratories and firms are now working side-by-side to develop revolutionary products and materials.
- Thirty thousand times thinner than a hair and 100 times smaller than a DNA molecule, the nanometer is a billionth of a meter, infinitesimally small. "Today, thanks to the development of high-performance technologies, we can observe and manipulate materials at this scale, as well as create items such as carbon nanotubes with extraordinary mechanical, electronic and thermal properties," explains Patrick Alnot, a researcher at Nancy's Henri Poincaré University (UHP). Nanotechnology is already at the heart of many applications that are vital to our daily lives, including electronics, computers and telecommunications. In the coming years, all scientific disciplines will be impacted. "The potential

applications are immense, ranging from medicine to chemistry to environmental sciences and beyond. This will enable us to enhance the properties of today's materials, to invent new ones and build machines that are extremely small in size."

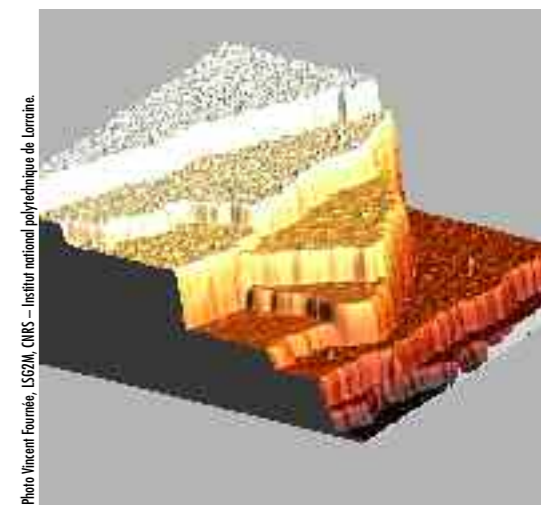


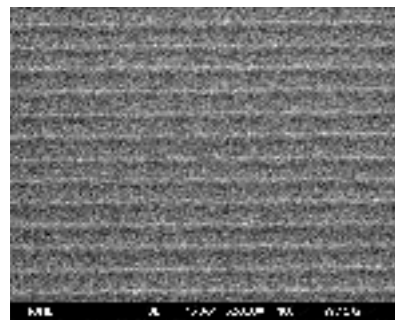
Photo Vincent Fourme, LSC2M, CNRS - Institut national polytechnique de Lorraine.

Aperiodic steps on the surface of a quasicrystal: their exceptional properties have been put to various uses, for example in the mechanics of space satellites.





Nancy's "Ecole des Mines" national engineering school hosts some of the world's most advanced equipment for the study of materials at atom scale.



Nanometric line networks are already to be found in mobile phones, where they contribute to filtering surface acoustic waves.



Doerler Mesures, a company based in Vandœuvre-lès-Nancy, designs sensors in collaboration with Nancy's laboratories specialised in nanotechnology.

In Nancy, a number of laboratories have launched programs focusing on "nanos". "This region has an internationally renowned research tradition, especially in the field of materials, involving a variety of different disciplines," explains Jean-Marie Dubois, Director of the Jean Lamour Research Federation (National Research Team FR 2797). "This cross-sectoral approach has opened the way to new fields of exploration and, today, Nancy excels both in metallurgy in the broad sense (alloys, ceramics, polymers, glass, etc.), and in nanoscience and micro and nanotechnology."

One of France's five nanoscience centers, C'Nano Grand Est, bringing together 25 laboratories, is managed by Patrick Alnot. Also in the works is the upcoming Jean Lamour Institute, which, in 2012, will "federate five Mixed Research Units (UMR) in the field of materials at the ARTEM university campus," adds Jean-Marie Dubois, the project's director. "This means 430 specialists together at one facility."

There is much at stake in this domain. "Nanoscience and nanotechnology have major economic development potential. We have been working closely with firms for a very long time. Thus, the question of innovation and technology transfer is central to our approach." Large French and international groups including Air Liquide, Areva, EADS, PSA, Siemens and others are naturally keeping a close eye on the work conducted at Nancy's laboratories.

The Jean Lamour Research Institute's know-how in metallurgy, materials and nanoscience will soon be integrated into Nancy's ARTEM project. This new type of university campus, based on a multidisciplinary approach, will bring together engineering (Ecole des Mines), management (ICN) and the higher school of art at the same facility.

"Today's steels have to satisfy new needs and demands," explains Jean-Claude Charbonnier, Director of International and Scientific Relations in the Arcelor group's Innovation division. "We need to master the nanometric scale in order to invent new alloys that are lighter and stronger, which would allow us to significantly reduce the fuel consumption of vehicles. In the field of packaging, it would also allow us to imagine "functional" or "intelligent" surfaces that are self-cleaning or antibacterial. Nancy's laboratories have the potential to provide us with solutions, which explains why we have organized close partnerships with several of them."

Local small and medium-sized firms are also playing a vital role. This collaboration is "viewed as a cultural exchange between scientists and people in the field," observes Jean-Marie Doerler, manager of Doerler Mesures, a company in Vandœuvre-lès-Nancy. "With the UHP's Laboratory of Physics of Ionized Media and Applications, we have been working to develop a wireless acoustic sensor. In our field, nanotechnology could open new horizons, such as collecting information without handling samples, measuring deformation at extremely high temperatures and much more."

These initial partnerships, which are paving the way for others, have already placed Greater Nancy at the heart of one of the major technological challenges of the 21st century.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

The era of expert platforms

In Greater Nancy, the Customer Relationship Management sector has now matured. Thanks to the constant growth it has experienced since it started in 1997, Nancy's CRM sector today boasts 48 platforms and nearly 2,400 jobs.



The Greater Nancy area is today one of France's best-equipped regions to accommodate the sector's flagship companies.



Francis Collet, Director of CIC-SNVB's online banking department, explains that the future of customer contact centres lies in high value-added services.

"Four key sectors stand out: IT and communications, distance selling, banking-insurance and healthcare-retirement", explains Vincent Rey, project manager for the Greater Nancy Development and Urban Planning Agency (ADUAN). "From customer service (Arvato Services, Vitalicom, Crédit Mutuel and France Telecom) to technical hotlines (Olitec and Berger-Levrault) to specialized help desks (Impôts Services, Pharmagest Inter@ctive, Maif and EDF-GDF) to online sales (Pages Jaunes and 3 Suisses), the platforms cover the full range of professions in the CRM field," he adds.

This sector has experienced some fundamental changes in recent years. The main change concerns the size of the organizations: although Greater Nancy has two platforms with over 200 employees, Arvato Services and Vitalicom - outsourcers who handle the CRM functions of their customers - most of the platforms are units of under 50 employees. These units are created within the firms that require all the expertise of their business field in order to meet customer needs.

The latest examples of this new generation include EDF Pro and CIC Filbanque, where Francis Collet, Director of the Online Banking department,

confirms, "Today, we are clearly moving towards professionalization of the business and high added value services."

By creating a first call center in Laxou on the outskirts of Nancy in 1998, SNVB was one of the first French banks to offer its clients secure telephone services. It became a national center of excellence in the field in 2003 thanks to its expertise in telephony-IT integration and has just opened a second customer contact center in Laxou, CIC Filbanque, to manage all of the CIC Group's online services and its 3.3 million clients. Its team of 70 agents handles an average of 2,000 customer contacts per day via the telephone, an interactive vocal server, the internet or interactive television.

"What we now offer goes far beyond the switchboard work of first-generation call centers, which amounted to traditional teller operations," adds Francis Collet. "We require our personnel to be increasingly specialized, offering skills ranging from asset management consulting to consumer loans to tax simulations."

These cutting-edge platforms chose to set up in Nancy for a reason, explains Jacqueline Iannacone, project coordinator at ADUAN. "With its specialized training centers, telecommunications infrastructures and new real estate developments, Greater Nancy is today one of France's best-equipped regions to accommodate the sector's flagship companies."

The Greater Nancy Development and Urban Planning Agency (ADUAN) and the Committee for the Development, Promotion and Expansion of Meurthe-Moselle (CAPEMM) conduct an annual "Customer Relationship Management Survey". You can find detailed information on the Greater Nancy Area's business portal, www.eco-grandnancy.com in the competitive call centers section.