

Re: Low cost PCB layout software

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.arch.embedded/2003-12/0040.html>

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Ralph Malph wrote:

- > *I am looking for low cost PCB layout software. My designs are not*
- > *overly complex, and are on small boards, but I will be using very small*
- > *parts and features ~0.4mm/0.016" pitch, .006"/.006" trace/space. I have*
- > *looked at a couple of web sites that list free software and have found*
- > *two types of packages; the no strings attached open source packages that*
- > *are not very mature or run on xNIX (and not windows) or the PCB fab*
- > *house supplied packages that tie you to getting your boards from them.*
- >
- > *Clearly I need something that actually works, so most of the truely free*
- > *packages are not viable. The PCB package from*
- > *<http://bach.ece.jhu.edu/~haceaton/pcb/> seems to work, but is not*
- > *supported under windows. It is not clear if it will run under Cygwin.*
- > *I guess I could dedicate a machine to PCB design and run Linux, but I am*
- > *pretty sure I would end up creating problems from my lack of experience*
- > *with *NIX.*
- >
- > *I looked at a few of the PCB vendor packages and have done one design*
- > *and ordered boards. It was fairly low risk since it only cost \$59*
- > *including shipping from expressPCB. But these boards have no soldermask*
- > *or silk screen. I can live without silk screen, but the solder mask is*
- > *important when using fine pitch parts. In general, I am not happy being*
- > *tied to a vendor and having to duplicate the layout work to use a*
- > *different vendor. Reentering a schematic is no big deal, but layout is*
- > *very time intensive and each tool is toally different.*
- >
- > *So that brings us to the commercial layout packages. Most of them are*
- > *several kilobucks and out of my budget. I found a list at*
- > *<http://www.olimex.com/pcb/dtools.html> of a lot of packages, but there is*
- > *no real info on them. So that is why I am here. Can I ask for opinions*
- > *on what tools will give the best benifit for the cost of the low end*
- > *tools? I hate to spend even \$100 on a tool that I am not sure I will*
- > *want to continue to use, but if I have confidence that it will be a good*
- > *tool, I would not mind paying \$500.*
- >
- > *So what are my options and how good are they for fine pitch work, up to*
- > *6 layers?*

comp.arch.embedded: Re: Low cost PCB layout software

>
> *And does anyone have any experience with TCI3? It seems to be a free*
> *tool, but when I follow the link, the page is in French. Anyone know if*
> *the tool can be used by English speakers (and readers)? Any English*
> *docs? I guess I could learn metric dimensions; 0.15 trace – 0.15 space*
> *:).*

Have a loom at EasyPC: <http://www.numberone.com>

It's very easy to use and is inexpensive. I used it for years.

Leon

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My low-cost Philips LPC210x ARM development system:

http://www.geocities.com/leon_heller/lpc2104.html