

Re: Low cost PCB layout software

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.arch.embedded/2003-12/0060.html>

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Date: 12/24/03

Date: 24 Dec 2003 18:37:26 GMT

>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 look at www.seetrax.co.uk