

Be Careful With That Acronym

In the early days after the RoHS Directive came into force I remember receiving a query emailed to me from overseas from someone who said he had an important question on the Directive that no-one else he had contacted so far could answer. Intrigued, I responded to him, but far from being a technical question or clarification sought about a specific piece of text in the legislation, he simply wanted to know how to correctly pronounce the name of the Directive. He said he had heard it spoken as "Rosh", "Roz", "Rose", "Rohass" and "Rohaz" and just wanted to know which was correct.

With 27 member countries and at least 22 different languages in use and recognised by the European Union itself, finding names and acronyms that are logical and memorable but universally suitable must be very difficult. The British sense of humour,



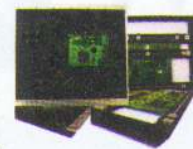
with its love of word-play, puns and double-meanings has already had some fun with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (The EU wants to take the WEEE out of our lives... perhaps) and no doubt there are similar examples with other acronyms and other EU languages.

However, you do have to wonder how long it took for the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the body which oversees the EU's REACH regulation, to realise that they would need to add a lower case "o" to the acronym for their recently proposed procedure for evaluating the substances under the regulation, the Community Rolling Action Plan, or "CoRAP" - which ought to have been an obviously poor choice!

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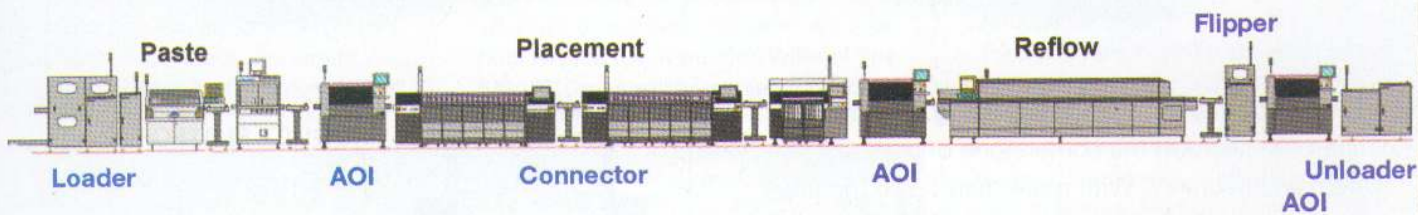
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