

# *Easy-PCB* Solder Reflow Oven

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## Features

- Insulated aluminum frame with XxYxZ interior chamber
- XXX Watt heating element with solid state relay control
- 120 VAC power supply with surge and short protection
- Forced convection fan driven by bipolar stepper motor with speed control
- Type X thermocouple for temperature feedback loop
- PIC18F14K50 based control
- Convenient 7-segment display and pushbutton user interface

heat absorbtion seen in infrared radiation based systems. Furthermore, *Easy-PCB* was designed from the ground up for soldering, so the heating elements and oven frame were optimized alongside the temperature controller for a typical solder reflow profile.

Figures/control-system.pdf

## Introduction

*Easy-PCB* is a small, desktop convection oven for DIY reflow soldering at home.

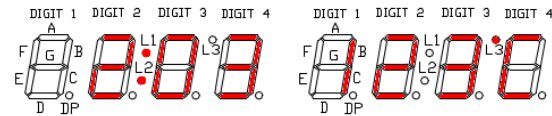
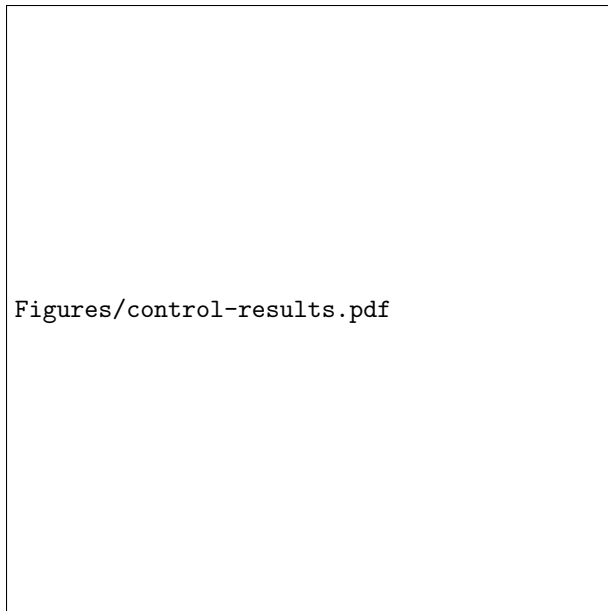
As integrated circuits continue to become smaller and faster, many  $\mu$ Controllers, FPGAs, and other ICs are no longer available in DIP form for breadboard prototyping or iron soldering. Similar to the shift away from PC parallel ports in the early 2000s, the shift away from DIPs means modern electronics hobbyists need more complicated equipment than their predecessors.

Currently, commercial solder reflow stations are available for soldering fine pitch, SMD, and BGA componenets. More recently, several hackers have created open source designs for inexpensive reflow ovens, using converted kitchen toaster ovens.

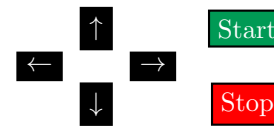
*Easy-PCB* is better because it is a convection oven; controlled air flow prevents parts from being blown out of position and convection heating obviates the uneven

The *Easy-PCB* Control System: not just a controller bolted onto a disjoint oven.

*Easy-PCB* allows hobbyists to produce reflow temperature profiles with a high degree of accuracy and repeatability. Alongside freely available PCB design programs like Eagle and low-quantity fabrication services like OSH Park, *Easy-PCB* makes modern integrated components, such as digital CMOS cameras, within the design space of hobbyists and hackers.



The red ‘stop’ button can be pressed at anytime to quit the current process or reset the microcontroller.



Pushbutton Interface

Set point programming with the 4 nav keys is used to enter a time–temperature profile. Use the ‘left’ and ‘right’ keys to move between set points and the ‘up’ and ‘down’ keys to edit each set point value.

## Faithful Temperature Profile Control

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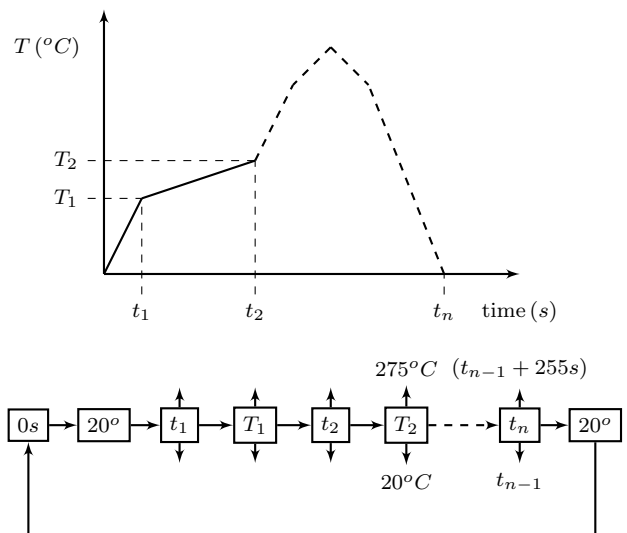
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## 1 User Interface

*Easy-PCB* presents temperature and time information on a four digit LED display. After pressing the green ‘start’ button, the current temperature and process runtime are alternately displayed every second.



Set Point Programming

A total of 128 set points can be entered. The first set point is always (0s, 20°C), and the process will terminate at the next occurrence of 20° in a point. Temperatures can take any value in the range  $20^{\circ}C < T < 275^{\circ}C = 527^{\circ}F$ . The time between two points must be between  $0 \leq t < 255$  seconds.

## 2 Plant Design

### 2.1 Temperature Objectives

A typical solder reflow profile is shown in figure 1. The optimal shape and peak temperature depend on the components and, more significantly, on the use of

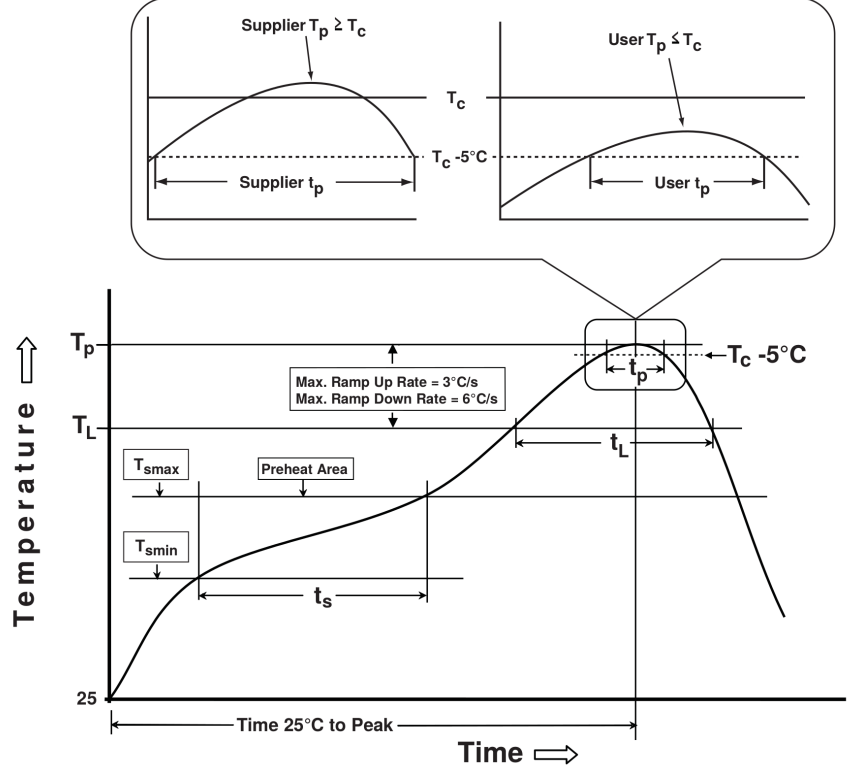


Figure 1: Standard Solder Reflow Profile, per IPC/JEDEC STD-1-020D.1

lead solder.

$$T_p \approx T_c = \begin{cases} 220 - 235^\circ\text{C} & \text{Leaded solder} \\ 245 - 260^\circ\text{C} & \text{Pb-free} \end{cases}$$

$$t_p = \begin{cases} 20\text{s} & \text{Leaded solder} \\ 30\text{s} & \text{Pb-free} \end{cases}$$

*Easy-PCB* was designed from the ground up for faithfully producing these reflow profiles. This design process for the thermodynamic system is detailed below.

## 2.2 Thermodynamics Theory

The heat required to increase temperature of a unit mass of material by one degree is

$$dQ = mc_p dT \quad (1)$$

where  $c_p$  is the specific heat of the material with units  $\left[\frac{\text{kJ}}{\text{kg} \cdot \text{K}}\right]$ .

$$\vec{q} = -k \vec{\nabla} T \quad (2)$$

where  $k$  is thermal conductivity with units  $\left[\frac{\text{W}}{\text{m} \cdot \text{K}}\right]$ .

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = -k \oint_S \vec{\nabla} T \cdot d\vec{A}$$

where  $d\vec{A}$  is a differential area element of a closed surface  $S$ .

$$\frac{\delta Q}{\delta t} = -kA \frac{\delta T}{\delta x} \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = hA \Delta T \quad (4)$$

where  $h$  is the heat transfer coefficient with units  $\left[\frac{\text{W}}{\text{m}^2 \cdot \text{K}}\right]$ .

## 2.3 Thermodynamic Design

Most microwaves draw between 600 and 1200 Watts of power. An IR toaster oven may draw 1500 Watts into its lamps. How much power does *Easy-PCB* need to produce the required temperature profiles?

Our approach for answering this question is to browse available parts on McMaster.com, imagine how they would be assembled into an oven, and then model their thermodynamic responses using PSPICE. Thermodynamics can be modeled in SPICE because temperature is mathematically analogous to voltage (both are potential functions) and heat energy to electric charge.

$$T[^\circ\text{C}] \Leftrightarrow V[\text{V}]$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} [W] \Leftrightarrow I[A]$$

A first conceptual design of *Easy-PCB* is shown in figure 2.

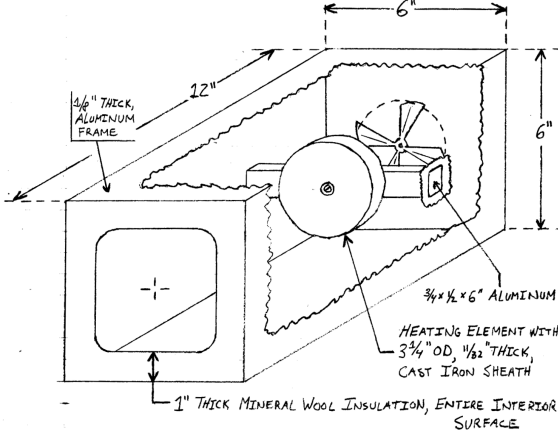


Figure 2: Concept for Thermodynamic System

In the concept, the oven chamber is isolated from the outside with walls of mineral wool insulation and aluminum. If the wall is relatively thin compared to the square root of its surface area, then its heat transfer can be modeled as a 1-D transmission line, like shown in figure 3.

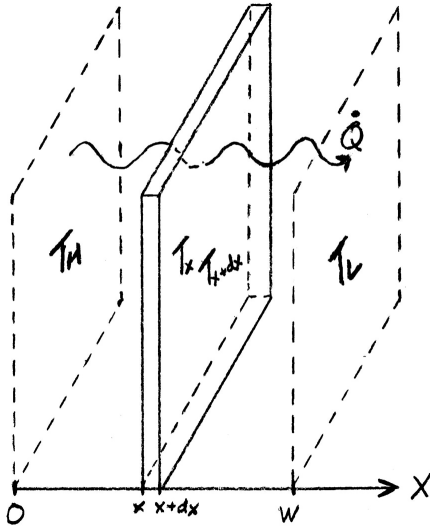


Figure 3: Heat Conduction in 1-D

Assuming conduction is the dominant mechanism of heat transfer and using Fourier's Law of heat conduction in 1-D, (equation 3) the rate of heat passing through a thin slice is

$$\frac{\delta Q}{\delta t} = kA \frac{\delta T}{\delta x}$$

And, from equation 1, the heat capacity of a thin slice of the metal sheath is

$$dQ = (\rho A dx) c_p dT$$

Rewriting these equations to look like current-voltage relationships gives

$$\delta T = R_x \frac{\delta Q}{\delta t}, \quad R_x = \frac{\delta x}{kA} \quad (5)$$

and

$$\frac{\delta Q}{\delta t} = C_x \frac{\delta T}{\delta t}, \quad C_x = \rho A c_p * \delta x \quad (6)$$

Values for thermal conductivity  $k$ , specific heat capacity  $c_p$ , and density  $\rho$  of different materials are listed in table 1.

Long metal bars and rods can also be modeled with equations 5 and 6 if the heat loss along the length of the bar is assumed to be negligible compared to heat transferred at the end faces.

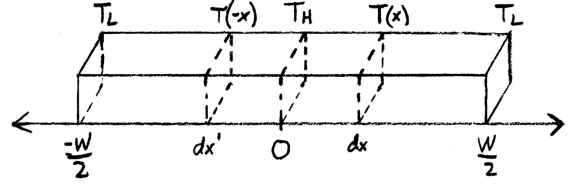


Figure 4: 1-D Conduction in Both Directions

For metal components where heat is injected at the center of the part and dissipates symmetrically in either direction, such as the support bar shown in figure 4 or the metal sheath encasing the heating element, the surface area can be doubled so that the transmission line only needs to be integrated in the positive direction.

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} R_x \Rightarrow R_x/2 \\ C_x \Rightarrow 2C_x \\ \{x | -\frac{w}{2} \leq x \leq \frac{w}{2}\} \Rightarrow \{x | 0 \leq x \leq \frac{w}{2}\} \end{array} \right. \quad (7)$$

At any moment in time, we can plot the temperature of air as one moves away from the sheath surface. We see there is a certain distance, called the skin depth  $\delta$ , over which the temperature gradient is nearly dissipated and the bulk air begins.

PLOT with  $T_{0et}/\alpha$  and  $T_{bulk}$  on y axis and x on x axis

Forced convection from the fan causes the bulk air, uniform temperature region to be pushed closer to the sheath's surface. If the skin depth can be pushed sufficiently close to the surface, then the time constant shrinks due to the relation  $\alpha = \frac{k}{\rho c_p} \delta$ . Thus,

Table 1: Thermal Conductivity, Specific Heat, and Density of Selected Materials

Material	Linear Region (K-K)	k ( $\frac{W}{m \cdot K}$ )	$c_p$ ( $\frac{kJ}{kg \cdot K}$ )	$\rho$ ( $kg/m^3$ )
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for sufficiently strong circulation and close skin depth, the time constant becomes small enough that the system is effectively always in steady state, where

$$\frac{dT}{dt} \approx 0$$

From the first law of thermodynamics (conservation of energy), the difference between heat flowing in and out of a thin slice by all mechanisms is equal to the heat stored within that slice, for all t and x.

$$\frac{\delta Q_{cap.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x} = \frac{\delta Q_{cond.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x} + \frac{\delta Q_{conv.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x}$$

Substituting equation 6 for the heat capacity of a thin slice yields:

$$\rho A c_p \frac{\delta T}{\delta t} = \frac{\delta Q_{cond.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x} + \frac{\delta Q_{conv.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x}$$

But we have just argued that if the skin depth can be made very close by forced convection, then  $\frac{dT}{dt} \rightarrow 0$ .

$$\frac{\delta Q_{conv.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x} = - \frac{\delta Q_{cond.}}{\delta t} * \frac{1}{\delta x}$$

Integrating across x is easy.

$$\frac{dQ_{conv.}}{dt}(x) = C - \frac{dQ_{cond.}}{dt}(x)$$

At the surface of the sheath ( $X = 0$ ), heat transfer in the air is 100% conduction because every air molecule at ( $X = 0$ ) is colliding with metal and exchanging energy. Therefore

$$C = \frac{dQ_{cond.}}{dt}(X = 0)$$

Applying Fourier's Law to the temperature profile found in equation ?? give us equations for the rate of heat transfer due to conduction, and finally this leads to

$$\dot{Q}_{cond.}(x) = Q_0 e^{-x/\delta}$$

and

$$\dot{Q}_{conv.}(x) = Q_0 (1 - e^{-x/\delta})$$

where

$$Q_0 = \frac{kAT_0}{\delta} e^{-t/\alpha}$$

Finally, if we absorb  $e^{-t/\alpha}$  into  $T_0$  for steady state, then

$$Q_0 = \frac{kA}{\delta} T_0 \quad (8)$$

## 2.4 Component Selection & SPICE Modeling

## 2.5 Transfer Model

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