Off the Clock: Unboxing Wireless Energy

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Quite a while ago I received a development kit for Wireless Energy from Würth-Midcom, with the purpose of using that in building a Robot. I have to admit that for several good – and several bad – reasons I have started slipping significantly on my planning for finishing the project in time for the competition. But, I am going to keep it up, and I will do my best to finish the project as soon as possible, regardless of whether or not that will be before or after the contest deadline.

So, this time I am going to do an unboxing of the materials I received a little less than two months ago. And just beyond the movie, I’ll walk through some fun details in writing, just for those of you secretly watching at work, without a headset.

< movie link >

As I also note in my video, and probably will at the start of all of them, nothing in my opinions or reviews is paid for. I did get goodies from Würth-Midcom, but they never told me what to write or think about them. And even if they did, I wouldn’t have accepted that.

So, what I got in the package is a design kit. How does that work? Well, Würth makes a whole range of cool design kits, often containing parts to experiment with. And the greatest thing about those kits is that once you have bought one, any refills are free for life. On a good faith basis, but of course, they won’t keep sending you new stuff on a weekly basis for buying just one kit.

Obviously, this design kit isn’t one of those kits full of parts, which get refilled, but instead it’s a ready-to-use application to implement wireless energy transfer in your own projects, using parts from Würth and ROHM Semiconductor. So, once you have figured out the energy transfer with their kit, you can order all the coils, passives and connectors you need from Würth.

I’ll side-track a little here and explain why I started this project liking Würth as a company, and the Würth-Midcom branch in the USA by automatic extension. I met the local representative for passive components while doing one of my Freelance projects in Veldhoven. He just walked in, wondering if this project might also use components that he could possibly source. He then started explaining that Würth has the mission to supply components to as many people as they can, directly. Not through Farnell, Digikey or Mouser, but just call your rep and you get them, whatever quantity, at the lowest available cost. I have heard this before, and regularly after two or three orders you get the answer “well, you know, your account isn’t large enough”. Würth is different. The two local representatives have now been helping me find my components, supplied them and regularly sent me free samples for tests and experiments for nearly four years and never asked me “would you mind ordering 10000, to keep your account active?”. They seem to realise that my enthusiasm about their services results in more use of their products in my projects everywhere, including both personal experiments and professional jobs. In fact, they regularly tell me, even if you were just a hobbyist, ordering one of each for a project each time, no problem. One last awesome thing about Wurth is that they send out their samples quickly. Almost always they endeavour to get them to you in two workdays (at least in west Europe to my knowledge), which is in stark contrast to almost any other manufacturer, to name one example, my Microchip samples for the processors for this project were ordered March 27th, they came in the start of May through regular mail. That’s more than a month. Wurth sends samples by UPS (again, over here) and tries to get them out the same day you asked for them.

This then leads me neatly back to the contents of the package. Not only did it contain the wireless energy kit, nope, they added in their electronic test tweezers (not in the video, because I lent it to someone) and all of the books, as well as their full product catalogues with a note saying “anything in these books, free of charge during the contest – with the exception of the experimenter kits”. So there as well, they aim for greatest customer satisfaction possible, regardless of what you do. Because I believe some of the contenders in this contest have less of a tie with product design and development for volume production than I do, and they surely got the same things in their box.

< All contents of the care package >

The design kit features a base station, a power supply of the “wall-wart” type as my US readership might call them, the tuned receiver set, some basic information and the default tweezers you get with any kit.

< image of kit contents >