The Standard

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High tech timber

The popularity of different materials changes as time passes – take pewter, bakelite or celluloid for example – but one material that has been in constant use since the origins of mankind, is timber. Helping to test this age-old material to ensure it can still compete against more recent arrivals is a brand new, state-of-the-art test facility in Shreveport, Louisiana USA.

This new facility covers 9000sq. ft. (800m^2) and is owned by TECO, a testing and accreditation organisation that serves timber product manufacturers throughout North and South America and parts of Europe. TECO's laboratory manager, Scott Drake, explains the background to the company's newest laboratory.

"Manufacturers come to TECO for accreditation of their products. The first part of that process involves inspection and approval of their plant and the other major aspect is to conduct rigorous testing of the products."

TECO has been conducting tests in purpose-built laboratories since the 1960s, when it opened its first test site in Eugene, Oregon. Situated in a region noted world-wide for timber products, especially plywood, the laboratory is still very much in use today.

A wood-derived material that is growing in popularity is Oriented Strand Board or OSB. Production of this tends to be concentrated in the southern US, hence TECO's decision to build its new laboratory in Shreveport. Both Shreveport and Eugene perform tests on a variety of wood products, the majority being OSB and plywood.

It was important that Shreveport be able to function as efficiently as possible, both in the ease with which testing could be performed and in the ability to pass test data both to clients and different locations within the organisation. Consequently TECO has not only specified Tinius Olsen test machines, it has also installed Tinius Olsen's Test Navigator software package.

TECO still uses Tinius Olsen test machines that it bought back in the sixties, so did it choose them again simply because they were familiar with the company? "Tinius Olsen is widely known and respected by our clients, so it reassures them to see us using the same equipment," agrees Scott. "But we chose Tinius Olsen for the Shreveport location and upgraded the test equipment in our Oregon laboratory because they were very cost competitive and because their support service is very good."

After the new H50K machines were installed at both sites, Tinius Olsen ran a thorough training programme that has been appreciated by TECO staff. "We're very happy with the service and the training on software," says Scott. "We need to do multiple tests and store all the data.0With the Test Navigator software this is very straightforward."

In an age of high technology, it is gratifying to see that such traditional values of efficient, helpful service – and traditional materials – can still compete so effectively.

K show is ok

To anyone involved in the plastics industry, the K Show in Germany is the trade show to visit for all the latest news, products and services in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Tinius Olsen's attendance at the show towards the end of last year was one of the best yet for company and customers alike.

The K Show demonstrated the considerable benefits that have come from the drawing together of UK-based Hounsfield Test Equipment and US parent, Tinius Olsen, says UK sales manager, Steve Taylor. The change meant that the company was able to exhibit not just individual machines, but a full and complete range of testing equipment needed for the plastics industry.

"Our customers have to work smarter to stay in competition," says Steve "And that includes reducing costs by using just one supplier for all their testing equipment, calibration and servicing needs." Tinius Olsen's line-up included H25KT and H5KS Materials Testing Machines, a 500L Laser Extensometer and 100S Contacting Extensometer, a model 503 Charpy and Izod Impact Tester, Specimen Notchers for impact samples, the MP600 Melt Flow Indexer and a Model 603 Deflection Temperature & Vicat Tester.

What's in a **name?**

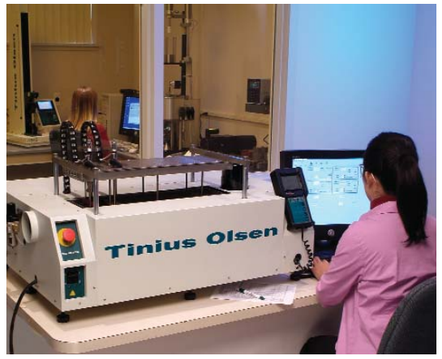
At Tinius Olsen, we have many customers that will use our products and services simply because they carry the Tinius Olsen name. Others choose Tinius Olsen only after spending a lot of time and effort researching what else is available. So which approach is the right one?

The typical Tinius Olsen customer is a specialist in their own field or sector. In addition to a general knowledge of materials testing, they usually have additional expertise that is critical to the success of their company or organisation.

When they discuss their testing requirements they are focussed on a very specific area (which is why Tinius Olsen has developed tests for just about everything imaginable, as listed on our website). It is understandable therefore if customers do not always stop to consider everything else that comes with the Tinius Olsen name.

For a start there's the accumulation of knowledge that comes from being, at 125 years old, one of the USA's longest-surviving family firms. Then there's the experience of the staff: from the senior staff that have served, and continue to serve, on national and international standards and development committees to the field and research staff, all of whom are fully qualified and accredited.

Tinius Olsen's research facilities in the USA and the UK are also at the forefront of developing the equipment needed for industry sectors constantly in a state of change. On top of all this, one of the



elements that customers from all areas appreciate most, is the level of service and support they receive. Whether its servicing and calibration, staff training or development of new tests, they tell us they appreciate the help and the feeling of being a valued Tinius Olsen customer.

So, when the focus is broadened to consider everything that comes with the Tinius Olsen name, should you just use the name as your guide, or should you look elsewhere as well? If you've got the time, then compare what others are really offering. If you've got the experience, you'll know Tinus Olsen cares for its customers.

Diary dates – where to see us in Spring 2005

Don't forget all the latest events where you can see Tinius Olsen products on display are listed on our web site at www.TiniusOlsen.com but here's a preview of what's in store for 2005.

June 6 – 8	**ANTEC** Boston, USA
June 13 – 15	**Plastec East** New York, USA
October 4 – 6	**Interplas** Birmingham, UK
October 26 – 28	**Automotive Testing Expo** Michigan, USA

Just the ticket for safety netting

A scaffolding company from Castleford, Yorkshire, Netting & Scaffolding Services Ltd, is perhaps one of the more unlikely customers for a precision materials testing machine from Tinius Olsen – yet the Tinius Olsen H10KS machine has proved invaluable for certifying the condition of safety nets used to prevent falls from scaffolding on construction sites.

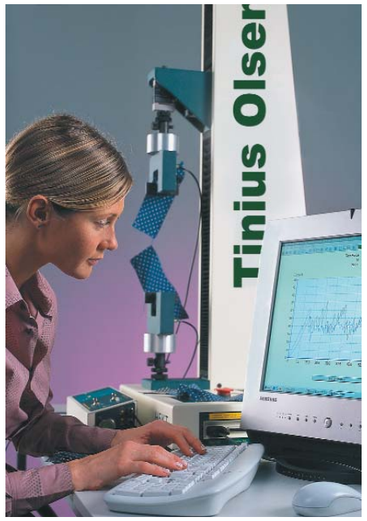
Safety regulations now determine that provision must be made to prevent personnel from falling wherever there is a risk. In situations where work is being done for example on roofs, this means that safety nets must be rigged. The nets themselves are made from polyethylene or polypropylene and have to conform to safety standard EN1263.

Every new net is supplied with a safety certificate valid for 12 months. After that time the net must be re-tested and a certificate produced to show the condition is still up to standard. This is where NSS Ltd turned to Tinius Olsen for a machine that could conduct the testing.

The company erects significant volumes of safety netting so it made economic sense to invest in its own testing and certification equipment. But now the Tinius Olsen machine is in place, NSS is also providing the testing and certification as a service for other contractors in the region.

"We chose the Tinius Olsen machine because it is so simple to use," explains Chris Graham of NSS. "It conducts the tensile test and then prints out the certificate for us – giving the date, strength and everything else we need."

New technology attracts **more business**



Investment in a new H5KS testing machine has enabled a textiles testing company in Bolton, Lancashire, to offer a greater range of testing services to its clients – building even further on the success of this new business venture.

IFS was started just two years ago by directors Karen Brooks and Zeb Alam to offer fire tests to textiles developers and manufacturers in the UK, Europe and the Far East. This has been such a success the company is now offering other physical tests, such as tensile, abrasion and linear density tests. The selection of a machine to conduct tensile, wing rip and seam slippage tests was narrowed to just two makes. Ultimately the Tinius Olsen H5KS was chosen because according to IFS although it was not the cheapest, the company offered the best all-round combination of product quality and after sales service and support.

IFS director Zeb Alam comments: "We're a new company concentrating purely on the textiles sector and we are attracting growing numbers of customers because we provide good service and expertise. So making quality and service the decisive factors in our choice of test machine was a logical step."

In addition to providing service support Tinius Olsen also offered training and even helped IFS in preparation for its assessment for UKAS test accreditation. "We definitely made the right choice," concludes Mr Alam.

Testing to new limits

Tinius Olsen's recently released testing software allows you to push your testing capabilities to new limits. Test Navigator software does all the usual stuff of controlling your testing machine, acquiring the test data and then performing standardized data analyses on that data, but it also does a lot more. It is able to do much more because of the very foundation upon which it is built.

Test Navigator software is written to take advantage of SQL (pronounced sequel) Server, developed by Microsoft, to address today's different kind of data management solution. We saw that our customers were becoming more dependent on the direct resultant test data and increasingly were including this data into corporate operational product and planning software. For this reason, Test Navigator was designed from the ground up to accommodate these changes.

"Benchmarked for scalability, speed, and performance, SQL Server 2000 is a fully enterprise-class database product, providing core support for Extensible Markup Language (XML) and Internet queries." What this means to you is that the robustness and operational speed of the database is significantly enhanced over those used by competitive product software. Database searches are much faster than other database engines and the data can be viewed across a network without any impedance to the performance of the system.

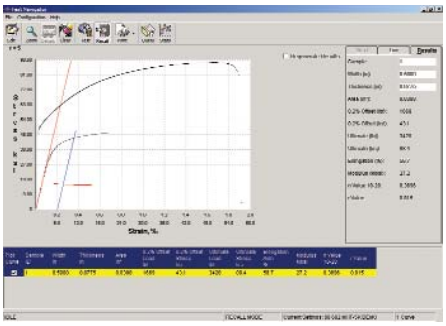
Key advantages of SQL Server are that it "exceeds dependability requirements and provides innovative capabilities with the enterprise data management platform to adapt quickly in a fast-changing environment." What this means to you is the database is inherently more robust with a more stable engine than other competitive software programs use.

For those customers who employ SQL based plant operational software, Test Navigator can be 'bolted on' to this main software and users can get test data from across the network and to use as an integral part of the plant system. As an example of this, one of our customers has five machines in different locations of their plant; the shipping manager, based in another separate part of the factory, is able to put material onto trucks in real time with all the quality certificates that are generated by the plant's software as soon as the tests are completed.

Test Navigator software also has built-in redundancy in the event of a system server breakdown.

The database files are typically held on the server, making back-up a simple and reliable operation, but should anything happen to the network, Test Navigator will resort to a local database on the controlling pc so that once the network is available again, there will be no loss of data.

"With the lowest implementation and maintenance costs in the industry, SQL Server 2000 delivers rapid return on your data management investment." What this means to you is that we are able to price this software attractively and can keep support costs down because of the increased stability.



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