

Dresden, July 6th, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

SenoLab gives you a seventh sense: Senorics launches new handheld device for material analysis

On their fifth anniversary, the Dresden-based startup presents its new development

The seventh sense is small, compact, and mobile: with the SenoLab, the high-tech company Senorics is launching a measuring device that allows material recognition within seconds. "With this easy-to-use device, it is not only possible to recognize the components of textiles, but also to determine the quantities of each component," explains Senorics CEO Dr. Ronny Timmreck. The first major industry customers are already lining up for the technology. The company presented their new innovative product for the first time at their fifth anniversary on July 6th, 2022.

The Saxon company is a specialized in developing and producing novel near-infrared spectroscopy sensors. These are smaller than a 1-cent coin and can be integrated into household appliances or smartphones, as well as into the company's mobile measuring devices. The technology enables the fast and mobile analyses of materials, which was previously only possible using large spectrometers in laboratories. In infrared spectroscopy, a material is irradiated with infrared light. Based on the wavelength distribution of the reflected light, ingredients can be detected, and their contained quantity determined. In an industrial setting, this technique also allows for better process monitoring and quality control.

Material sensing for everyone

While previous models worked with an external power supply, the newly developed device now has an integrated rechargeable battery. Additionally, users can now operate it via app and get the results displayed on their smartphone within seconds. "The whole analysis works with an accuracy of over 97 percent," explains Dr Robert Brückner, CTO at Senorics. Extensive prior knowledge is not required to operate the device, which will be offered to users under a monthly or yearly subscription.

In future, applications can be directly adapted to the needs of Senorics' customers. "Due to the demand of our customers, our current focus is strongly on textiles. However, the sensors can of course also be adapted to suit other applications," explains Ronny Timmreck. For example, the Dresden-based company is currently working with one of the world's largest yarn manufacturers, which uses the measuring devices to analyze the quality of its finished yarns. Furthermore, in a new project funded by the Free State of Saxony, Senorics and partners will work on an analysis method for medical cannabis. The goal is to quantify the ingredients tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), which are responsible for the medicinal effect of hemp.

A role model for other startups

"Senorics is one of the great success stories in Saxony's start-up landscape," says Sebastian Gemkow, Minister of Science of the Free State of Saxony, during the anniversary celebrations. The company proves that scientific knowledge can be transferred to actual products successfully if the conditions are right. The Saxon Ministry of Science and the Saxon Ministry of Economics want to create even better conditions for this science transfer to happen in the future. "Senorics is a role model for future founders, and I believe that the company is on its way to becoming the next Saxon Unicorn."

Prof. Dr. Ursula Staudinger, Rector of TU Dresden, recalled the beginnings of Senorics in her opening speech. The foundations of the technology were developed several years ago at the Dresden Integrated Center for Applied Physics and Photonic Materials (IAPP) at TU Dresden. The start-up was spun off in 2017. "TU Dresden is one of the most transfer-oriented and innovative universities in Germany," said the rector. 20 spin-offs and 60 successful patent applications per year underpin her statement. The university wants to support this process even better in the future, by founding a center for technology transfer and entrepreneurship.

Sensors for smartphones

Today, Senorics has around 40 employees. "Together we want to create value and save our customers time and money," said Timmreck. The team is currently working on several large projects, including on a tool for vacuum cleaner robots with a big household appliance manufacturer. Together with ZEISS Spectroscopy, the Dresden team is developing a new technology for agriculture that is intended to make work more convenient for farmers.

The plans at Senorics go even further. "Our big vision is to integrate our sensors into smartphones," explains the CEO. Then everyone could use various apps to test the ripeness of fruit in the supermarket, determine what fabric clothing is actually made of, or check the authenticity of medical pills. "Technology made in Dresden, the organic light-emitting diode, is already built into the display of smartphones today. Our goal is to have our sensor chip integrated into the back of the phone within the next five years."

About Senorics

Senorics is a high-tech company from Dresden, whose technology makes near-infrared spectroscopy suitable for the mass market. With the help of the new sensors, the composition of materials, such as food, agricultural products, plastics, textiles, or pharmaceuticals, can be analyzed and their quantity determined effortlessly. The sensors are very small,

inexpensive, spectrally extremely powerful, and robust against external influences. This makes them ideally suited to be implemented into devices aimed at end consumers, e.g., in the field of household appliances or mobile electronics. For the type of spectroscopy used, a sample is irradiated with infrared light. From the wavelengths of the reflected light and with help of algorithms developed by Senorics, the ingredients contained can be identified and quantified within seconds. The company, which was founded in 2017, is a spin-off of TU Dresden. Today, 43 employees are part of the team. Investors include FIDURA Private Equity Fonds, ZEISS Ventures, Technologiegründerfonds Sachsen, Ventura Investment and TU Dresden Aktiengesellschaft (TUDAG).

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