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Fibre optic interconnecting devices and passive components – Summarising results of round robin on connector end face scratch recognition and verification by automated microscopes

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FIBRE OPTIC INTERCONNECTING DEVICES AND PASSIVE COMPONENTS – SUMMARISING RESULTS OF ROUND ROBIN ON CONNECTOR END FACE SCRATCH RECOGNITION AND VERIFICATION BY AUTOMATED MICROSCOPES

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INTRODUCTION

It is known that contamination and scratches on connector end face can result in degradation of optical performance as described in IEC TR 62627-05. It is important to inspect and clean, when necessary, each connector before mating with another connector to ensure they are fit for function. The visual inspection methods and criteria for fibre optic connectors and fibre-stub transceivers are defined in IEC 61300-3-35. Three different methods can be used for visual inspection: direct view optical microscopy (method A), video microscopy (method B) and automated analysis microscopy (method C). All methods are susceptible to system variability: methods A and B are operator dependent; method C is operator independent but relies on software analysis for measurement results. The uncertainty inherent to imaging equipment, processing methods, and detection software can lead to measurement variability among different brands and even the same types of microscopy. For all methods, the fibre microscopes can be certified for use in either low- and high-resolution applications with a purpose-built certification artefact.

There is industry concern about the veracity of the results of the visual inspection of the same part using different automated inspection equipment and software for method C. The IEC SC 86B task force group on scratch recognition was organized to investigate automated inspection system variability and provide recommendations to improve repeatability and reproducibility of the inspection. The task force group specifically limited its investigation to inspection using method C.

The task force group consisted of the following members (in alphabetical order): Arden, CommScope, Corning, Data Pixel, Exfo, Fibre QA, Fluke Corporation, Sumix, University College of London, and decided to perform this investigation by means of a round robin. The round robin involved inspection systems from multiple vendors in a blind study to determine the baseline performance of the systems with regard to automated scratch detection relative to IEC criteria of pre-selected samples.

This report summarizes the results (data collection and analysis) of end face scratch recognition and verification round robin performed by the following task force contributors (5 fibre inspection system manufactures). The following sequence in which the contributors are listed does not represent the order in which the data is presented in the results section. One contributor provided results from four unique inspection systems, each having their own participant ID (eight ID’s in total):

- Data-Pixel;
- Exfo;
- FiberQA;
- Fluke Corporation;
- Sumix.

FIBRE OPTIC INTERCONNECTING DEVICES AND PASSIVE COMPONENTS – SUMMARISING RESULTS OF ROUND ROBIN ON CONNECTOR END FACE SCRATCH RECOGNITION AND VERIFICATION BY AUTOMATED MICROSCOPES

1 Scope

This document summarises the results of a round robin on connector end face scratch recognition and verification by automated microscopes. The prime objectives of the study were:

- determine the amount of variability (repeatability and reproducibility) when different state-of-the-art inspection systems are assessed against IEC 61300-3-35:2015;
- evaluate any system-to-system variation in the quantity of reported scratches;
- provide recommendations to improve the repeatability and reproducibility of fibre optic inspection systems.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.