

iBlue: The First Industrial Bluetooth Transmitter

ITAMCO (Indiana Technology and Manufacturing Companies) has released the iBlue—the first handheld bluetooth transmitter that gathers crucial production data and sends it to bluetooth-enabled smartphones, tablets and computers. The iBlue replaces several tools including hardness testers, micrometers and temperature readers.

When the iBlue is paired with a bluetooth-enabled device, it gathers, records and sends data through its three ports: a K-type thermocouple port—the iBlue comes with a K-type thermocouple probe—, a 3-pin metal hardness probe port and a USB Human Interface Device (HID) enabled port that connects with a wide range of non-proprietary tools including keyboards, micrometers, calipers, and barcode scanners. No special software is required and data from the iBlue can be sent as a text email or placed into Microsoft Excel and Notepad. iBlue is compatible with the most common operating systems including Apple's iOS, Android, Blackberry, Windows and Linux.

“We’ve Got a Free App for That”

iBlue isn't ITAMCO's first foray into mobile technology; the company has launched several free smartphone apps for industrial applications. Two of their apps, **Hardness Tester** and **Convert Temperature**, extend the iBlue's capabilities. Hardness Tester calculates approximate hardness conversion numbers between popular Rockwell, Vickers and Knoop hardness scales for non-austenitic steels. The Hardness Tester smartphone app converts data acquired with the iBlue and a hardness probe. (The iBlue accepts D/DC, D+15, E, C, DL

and G hardness probes.) The Hardness Tester will graph results and previous tests (Max, Min and Average) can be recalled with the touch of a button. The data can be sent to any compatible Air Print Printer from the app. The app is in conformance to ASTM A956-06 and ASTM E140-07.

The Convert Temperature app converts different scales of temperature such as Fahrenheit, Celsius and Kelvin. Temperature readings can be emailed, printed, and graphed the same as the Hardness Tester data. The app works seamlessly with the iBlue and its K-type thermocouple probe (included with the iBlue).

The apps are available for Apple, Android and Blackberry smartphones.

iBlue and the Technology-Driven Shop Floor

The iBlue and smartphone apps are part of ITAMCO's overall initiative to bring technology to their own shop floor. Joel Neidig, an engineer at Indiana Gear (a division of ITAMCO) and one of iBlue's developers, said, “We're in the process of connecting our machine tools to a plant monitoring system so it just made sense to have an electronic method of gathering and distributing the temperature, dimensions and hardness data of our gear products.” The iBlue is used by machine operators, engineers and quality control staff at Indiana Gear. “iBlue is saving me a lot of time on the shop floor because it's an all-in-one tool,” said Michael Blum, one of Indiana Gear's Quality Control Specialists. “It's easy to carry around and it's accurate. We're already using data gathered from the iBlue to electronically track and analyze production processes.” The iBlue has worked so successfully at Indiana Gear that the ITAMCO staff decided to market it worldwide.

iBlue Is Bundled and Priced for Economy

The iBlue comes with a USB charger cable, OtterBox belt clip and a K-type thermocouple probe. The iBlue package is priced at \$499 and can be ordered online with Google Wallet at www.itamco.com/iBlue or by calling ITAMCO at (574) 936-2112. The Hardness Tester and Convert Temperature smartphone apps can be downloaded from the Apple App Store, Google Play, Windows Marketplace and the Blackberry App World. Search “ITAMCO” to locate the apps.

iBlue is easy to pair with bluetooth devices and simple to use. ITAMCO has provided how-to videos and a FAQ page at their website (www.itamco.com). ●



iBlue is compatible with USB-compatible micrometers, hardness tester probes and K-type Thermocouples. A K-type thermocouple comes with the iBlue.