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Plug-in LEDs light up Christmas

27 November 2001

The first LED-based Christmas lights that do not need a transformer have gone on sale in the US.



LED strand in use

These LEDs look set to become a popular alternative to traditional Christmas incandescent bulbs that require replacing every year.

A string of 100 light emitting diodes (LEDs) that can be plugged directly into the mains power supply without the need for a transformer has been developed by US-based company [Fiber Optic Designs](#).

While LED-based Christmas lights have been on the market for some time, David Allen, president of Fiber Optic Designs, claims his company is the first to eliminate the need for a transformer. But he is reluctant to reveal how his company achieved this as he has a patent pending on the technology.

Single strands are available containing up to 100 lamps over a length of 10 m. Each string has a plug at either end allowing strands to be joined to increase the overall length.

Allen said: "I was becoming totally fed up with traditional Christmas lights that needed replacing every year. These LEDs last much longer, cost less to operate and can be used indoors or out." Fiber Optic Designs is gearing up to enter the USD 1.9 billion market for Christmas lights and holiday decorations this year with the launch of its first product line.

The 2001 strings will contain LEDs emitting in the red, orange, yellow and green bands of the visible spectrum. The typical output from a single device is of the order of 3 000 mcd with a lifetime of 200 000 hours.

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In addition, the 2002 strings will incorporate blue and white LEDs having a significantly higher brilliance of 6 000 mcd.

Allen told *Optics.Org*: "We think the applications for this technology are very pervasive. We have already had inquires from companies dealing with lighting around amusement parks and even for emergency walkway lighting on aircraft that are required to operate even when there is a power failure."

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