BANNOCKBURN, IL – North American printed circuit board shipments and orders in August were both flat compared to August 2011, says **IPC**.

Year to date, shipments were down 4.6%, and orders were up 0.2%. Sequentially, shipments increased 6.6%, and orders increased 14.1%.

The book-to-bill ratio in August decreased slightly to parity at 1.00. A ratio of more than 1.00 suggests that current demand is ahead of supply, which is a positive indicator for sales growth over the next two to three months.

Rigid PCB shipments were down 0.1% year-over-year, while orders increased 1.3% compared to August 2011.

Year to date, rigid PCB shipments decreased 4.7%, and orders were up 1.1%. Sequentially, rigid PCB shipments were up 7.2%, and orders increased 14.1%.
The book-to-bill ratio for North American rigid PCBs strengthened to 1.02.

Flexible circuit board shipments in August were up 1.7%, and orders were down 14.7% year-over-year.

Year to date, flex board shipments decreased 3.4%, and orders fell 8.5%. Sequentially, shipments increased 0.3%, and orders were up 13.8%.

The flex circuit board book-to-bill dropped sharply to 0.87, as a result of weak orders in July and August, says IPC.

“Both rigid PCB and flexible circuit orders in August showed solid growth over the prior month, but weak flexible circuit orders over the past two months caused a decrease in the book-to-bill ratio,” said Sharon Starr, IPC director of market research. “Flexible circuit orders tend to be volatile, however, and the August results should not be interpreted as a trend. Based on seasonal patterns, we expect to see a stronger performance in September.”

Rigid PCBs represent an estimated 90% of the current industry in North America. In August, 82% of both rigid and flexible PCB shipments were domestically produced. Flexible circuit board manufacturers indicated bare circuit boards accounted for about 43% of their shipment value reported for the month.