

THE IOTA – INTEGRITY, RELIABILITY, SECURITY

Founded in 1993, the International Optical Technologies Association (IOTA), formerly known as IHMA, represents leading global players in the optical security ecosystem. With a renewed focus, IOTA promotes an inclusive ecosystem for optical security technologies, solutions, and systems (OST), which are essential for protecting fiduciary documents, identity credentials, and branded products.

As the authoritative voice of the industry, IOTA drives innovation, establishes standards, and fosters global collaboration in the fight against counterfeiting and fraud.

IOTA membership confers authenticity and credibility on companies that join – all of which are rigorously vetted and adhere to a strict Code of Practice governing standards, business ethics, customer service, respect for and protection of customers' and each others' intellectual property.

The IOTA is a not-for-profit membership organisation registered in the UK, liability limited by guarantee.

Membership is open to all Optical Variable Device (OVD) suppliers. For more information, membership benefits, and the procedure for joining the IOTA, please visit iot-association.org.

OVDs – THE MARK OF AUTHENTICITY

Since their introduction in the early 1980s, OVDs have become one of the most common overt or public security features on value documents and branded goods, their presence both indicating the authenticity of these items and providing a powerful deterrent to counterfeiting.

WHY? BECAUSE THEY WORK

OVDs cannot be copied by conventional reprographic means. Their effects cannot be reproduced or simulated by conventional printing or finishing techniques. The skills, technology and investment involved in their design, origination and manufacture ensures that their production is beyond the reach of most would-be counterfeiters. Even the most determined forgers will be unlikely to produce OVDs that are effective and accurate copies of the original.

OVDs are also highly versatile. They can be applied cost-effectively to a wide variety of substrates and products as part of conventional printing, packaging and labelling processes. They can also be integrated with other security features and technologies to provide multi-layered authentication solutions combining overt and covert security with track and trace capabilities.

As a result, OVDs are widely used on all manner of security documents including banknotes, passports and ID cards, fiscal stamps, tickets, vouchers, cheques, payment cards etc. They are also used to protect branded goods from counterfeiting, adulteration, substitution and parallel trading, featuring on many of the world's leading brands of pharmaceuticals, IT products, automotive components, luxury and consumer goods.



USE OVDS TO PROTECT YOUR PRODUCTS... USE THE SIR TO PROTECT YOUR OVDS

The Security Image Register (SIR) is a secure register of holographic images, established by the IOTA to safeguard copyright and underpin the use of OVDS in authentication and security printing.

IOTA members register the OVDS they produce on behalf of their customers – establishing a record of who makes it, when it was first made and who is using it, benefiting both the holder of the copyright and its user. (The SIR is not a formal copyright register but as a record of first use it can be helpful in the event of a dispute.)

IOTA members also search the SIR before making a new OVD to help to prevent the accidental copying of an image. And if there is an attempt to fraudulently copy the hologram or other OVD, this will be identified through searching the Register. To date, the SIR has helped to uncover and prevent several cases of attempted counterfeiting and many users of secure OVDS require these to be registered on the SIR.

The SIR is operated for the IOTA by the Counterfeiting Intelligence Bureau, a division of the International Chamber of Commerce, a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation accredited by the UN. The Register is operated in absolute confidence by the CIB. Neither IOTA members nor staff have access to the Register, thereby ensuring that commercial information is not compromised.

To date, over 10,000 OVDS have been registered with the SIR. The service is free of charge to IOTA members.



INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Recognising the importance of international standards in facilitating quality products and international trade, the IOTA has been active in the International Organisation for Standards (ISO) since 2008.

The Association has also participated in standards development with the European Federation of Graphics Associations (Intergraf) and the North American Security Products Organisation.

Through these organisations, the IOTA has contributed to the drafting of several standards.

ISO 14298: Management of security printing and security foil production processes. A European standard applied by Intergraf and used by security printers and hologram manufacturers around the world, for which the IOTA wrote the Security Hologram Addendum so that hologram companies can become certified as security producers.

The standard specifies the steps that security printers and hologram manufacturers should follow to ensure that their processes are secure. Intergraf and NASPO both have certification auditors for this standard which require that, as a part of their risk reduction processes, hologram producers should use a hologram register to check the availability of proposed designs and to register their holograms.

At present this means the IOTA's SIR as there is no other hologram or OVD register operating.

ISO 12931: Performance criteria for authentication solutions used in the field of material goods, which is obviously important to hologram producers who supply holograms for product and brand protection.

ISO 17901-1: Methods of measuring diffraction efficiency and associated optical characteristics of holograms.

ISO 17901-2: Methods for measurement of hologram recording characteristics.

These two parts of ISO 17901 give detailed methods for the measurement of key characteristics of holograms.

The IOTA also actively cooperates with the Authentication Solution Provider's Association (ASPA) in India and Secure Identification Union (SIU) in China to further promote the use of SIR and ensure the highest professional, security and quality standards are maintained.



OVDs – THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Brand owners operating in a highly competitive consumer marketplace are continually looking for new methods of product enhancement and differentiation. The unique visual effects of OVDs provide this competitive edge by bringing enhanced brand impact, point of sale appeal and added perceived value to consumer products.

Holographic packaging supplied by IOTA members has been responsible for spectacular sales increases in sectors as diverse as luxury goods, confectionery, champagne and spirits, soft drinks and beers, perfumes, toiletries, tobacco products, stationery, books, DVDs and clothing.

Holography is a highly versatile medium – and holographic packaging materials such as laminating foils and films can be configured to a variety of packaging formats with minimal or no impact on standard converting and printing processes. Holographic images work best when integrated within the overall design, with transparent, translucent and opaque inks used in combination with techniques such as blind embossing and varnishing to provide effects that range from subtle enhancement to brilliant impact. The only limit to these effects is the imagination of packaging designers and brand managers.

Whether used for seasonal or one-off promotions, for evergreen packaging or for in-store décor, there is no medium that allows more scope to creative or innovative designers, and no medium more guaranteed to position your products ahead of those of your competitors.

SECURING THE POSITION OF OVDs

The pre-eminence of OVDs as a security feature is assured not only by their attributes, but because of the work that the IOTA undertakes as the voice of the industry to educate potential users, disseminate best practice and advise on the optimisation of the technology as part of anti-counterfeiting programmes.

“Users” include not only individual companies but also, critically, regulators, standards organisations and industry bodies around the world. The IOTA is continually in touch with such organisations, ensuring that – when standards are being drawn up, legislation proposed or specifications for national or industry-wide programmes considered – OVDs are at the top of the list, whether for use on their own or in combination with other security technologies to provide multi-level authentication.

The IOTA liaises with anti-counterfeiting organisations, contributes to public and industry consultations on anti-counterfeiting procedures, advises national regulatory bodies, implements an ongoing and robust media relations campaign, attends and presents at industry events, workshops, seminars and conferences around the world.

This international presence, and the collective weight that the IOTA can bring to bear on behalf of its members, is helping to ensure the continuing pre-eminent position of OVDs throughout the world.



THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

There are important benefits to being part of the IOTA.

Our members are the leading developers and suppliers of optical technologies for security, packaging, graphics and other commercial applications around the world in what is now a billion-dollar industry.

Membership of the IOTA signifies that a company is committed to meeting the rigorous requirements of the Code of Practice, thereby assuring its customers, suppliers and partners of ethical business practices and quality products.

KEY BENEFITS

1. ENHANCE YOUR BRAND CREDIBILITY

IOTA membership demonstrate your commitment to ethical practices and quality.

2. BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Stay ahead with business intelligence through our monthly newsletters and publications – Holography & Optical Technology News, Patent Newsletter, and Authentication & Brand News – plus tailored tender alerts to help you identify new business opportunities early.

3. COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

Safeguard your work with Security Image Register (SIR), the world's only secure registry of holographic images and other optically variable devices (OVDs).

4. PROMOTE INNOVATION

Showcase your achievements and innovations through IOTA Program - Excellence in Optical Technologies Awards, PR campaign, IOTA Website (members releases), Webinars & Others.

5. INDUSTRY NETWORKING

Connect and Collaborate with ethical peers, partners, and potential customers worldwide.

6. PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY

Support the secure optical technologies sector and help shape its future direction.

OTHER BENEFITS

AUTHENTICATION & BRAND NEWS™

A monthly PDF copy of the 8-page publication (subscription costs £2,260) and includes archives.

HOLOGRAPHY & OPTICAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS™

A monthly PDF copy of the 8-page publication (subscription costs £2,260) and includes archives.

TENDER ALERTS

Receive tender alert notifications for all public tenders around the world specifying holograms and other optical components.

PATENT NEWSLETTER

IOTA Patent Newsletter is forwarded at the end of each month and corresponds to the patents appearing during the previous month.

SECURITY IMAGE REGISTER

A system for protecting your optically variable images for you and your customers. A growing number of users now demand that their images are registered on the SIR

HOW TO JOIN US

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?

Membership currently embraces all developers and suppliers of security features based on technologies that in addition to holography, include micro-lens arrays, micro-mirrors, plasmonics, nano-gratings, colour change, caustics, polarisation, photonic crystals, special print-generated effects, or a combination of these.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

The membership fees are as follows:

Turnover under £7.5 million (GBP) – **£2,625**

Turnover over £7.5 million (GBP) – **£4,355**

A one-off administrative joining fee of £195 will be included in your first membership invoice.

PROCESS OF APPLICATION

1. SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Download and complete the application form from the IOTA website (iot-association.org/about-us/#join-us) and send it with supporting documents (such as a company brochure, presentation, or other relevant material) to the IOTA Secretariat at info@iot-association.org.

2. INITIAL REVIEW

The Secretariat reviews your application for completeness and accuracy.

3. BOARD APPROVAL

Once reviewed, the application is forwarded to the IOTA Board for approval.

4. WELCOME AS A MEMBER

Successful applicants will be notified promptly and officially welcomed into IOTA.

Confidentiality: All information and documents submitted as part of the application will remain strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of membership evaluation.

HOW TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST



We appreciate your interest in IOTA membership. For any questions or further details, please contact us on +44 (0)1932 785 680 or email info@iot-association.org.

We look forward to welcoming you as a valued member.



THE IOTA CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Members of the International Optical Technologies Association (IOTA) undertake to operate their business in a manner which enhances the reputation of the industry and the IOTA. In dealings with each other, with customers and suppliers, members will observe the highest standards of business integrity and business ethics
2. All IOTA members are bound by the IOTA's Articles of Association which oblige all members to follow this Code of Practice. A member in breach of this obligation, or otherwise operating in such a way as to bring the IOTA and the industry into disrepute, should be brought to the attention of the Board for notification to a General Meeting which is empowered to suspend the membership or expel from membership such companies
3. All members will issue standard conditions of contract which will be available to all customers or potential customers. In dealings with customers or potential customers members will not knowingly misrepresent the characteristics and functioning of their products or their capabilities. Members will use their best endeavours to ensure that orders are delivered to customers as specified and on time.
4. Where by reason of factors outside their control, such as fire, flood, industrial unrest, bankruptcy or other factors, a member is unable to meet the contractual obligations for quantity or date delivery, then by agreement with the customer the member will endeavour to place that work with another IOTA member and will co-operate fully with that member. If required or necessary, and in strictest confidence, the IOTA will undertake the finding of a member to complete the order.
5. IOTA members will respect the intellectual property rights of their suppliers, sub-contractors and other members of the holography industry. Members undertake to operate within the Berne Convention and to make clear to customers and contractors who owns and/or has the rights to use the designs, drawings, artwork, master and sub-master plates of any given hologram or other security feature. The IOTA publishes guidelines to cover these matters.
6. Members undertake to use their best endeavours to protect their own, other producers' and customers' intellectual property rights, which will include the investigation of customers where these are not previously known to the member, and investigation of the design of all commissions where the customer supplies artwork (in whatever form), to ensure that the proposed image does not infringe any IPR and that any registered or pre-existing designs, logos etc incorporated into the image are used with the permission of the rights holder. Members will use all resources available to them to this end including the Security Image Register and/or other copyright or registers approved by the IOTA for this purpose.
7. Where appropriate, members undertake to pay a royalty or a royalty waiver fee and to honour all contractual obligations to an artist or originator who has supplied holograms or other security features for reproduction.
8. IOTA members will operate within the environmental health and safety legislation that applies to them as a minimum standard of care and concern for the environment and the health and safety of their staff, customers and end users.
9. Every member of the IOTA accepts the responsibility of maintaining this Code of Practice and striving to enhance the reputation of the IOTA so that membership is seen to stand for quality and customer satisfaction.

Members Around the Globe



International Optical Technologies Association

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