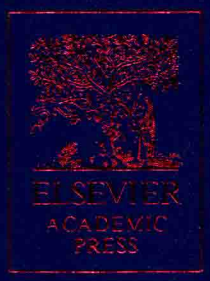

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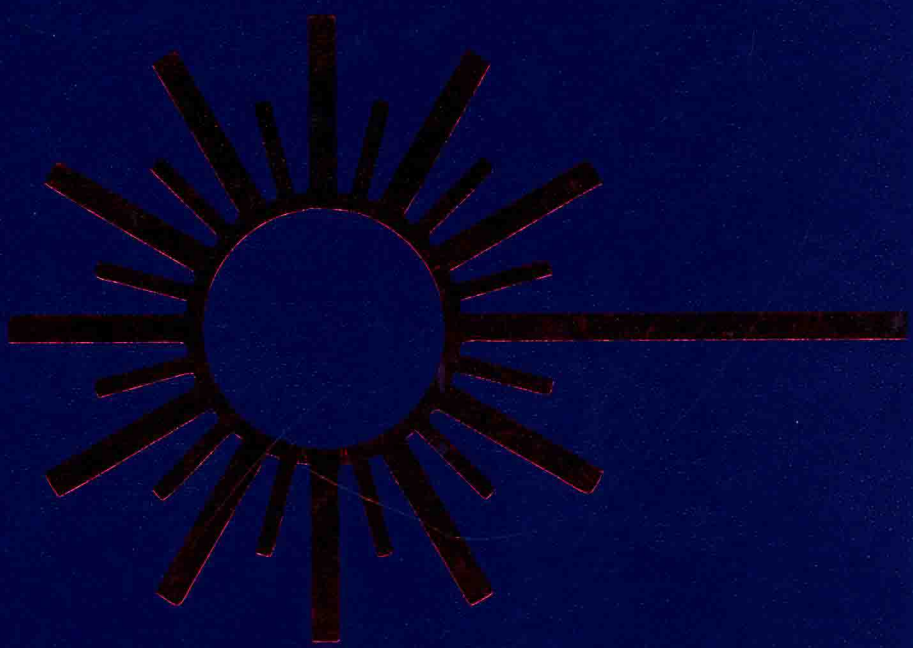

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Preface

We live in a world powered by light, but much of the understanding of light was developed around the time of the French Revolution. Before the 1950s, optics technology was viewed as well established and there was little expectation of growth either in scientific understanding or in technological exploitation. The end of the Second World War brought about huge growth in scientific exploration, and the field of optics benefited from that growth. The key event was the discovery of methods for producing a source of coherent radiation, with the key milestone being the demonstration of the first laser by Ted Maiman in 1960. Other lasers, nonlinear optical phenomena, and technologies such as holography and optical signal processing, followed in the early 1960s. In the 1970s the foundations of fiber optical communications were laid, with the development of low-loss glass fibers and sources that operated in the wavelength region of low loss. The 1980s saw the most significant technological accomplishment: the development of efficient optical systems and resulting useful devices. Now, some forty years after the demonstration of the first coherent light source, we find that optics has become the enabling technology in areas such as:

- information technology and telecommunications;
- health care and the life sciences;
- sensing, lighting, and energy;
- manufacturing;
- national defense;
- manufacturing of precision optical components and systems; and
- optics research and education.

We find ourselves depending on CDs for data storage, on digital cameras and printers to produce our family photographs, on high speed internet connections based on optical fibers, on optical based DNA sequencing systems; our physicians are making use of new therapies and diagnostic techniques founded on optics.

To contribute to such a wide range of applications requires a truly multidisciplinary effort drawing together knowledge spanning many of the traditional academic boundaries. To exploit the accomplishments of the past forty years and to enable a revolution in world fiber-optic communications, new modalities in the practice of medicine, a more effective national defense, exploration of the frontiers of science, and much more, a resource to provide access to the foundations of this field is needed. The purpose of this Encyclopedia is to provide a resource for introducing optical fundamentals and technologies to the general technical audience for whom optics is a key capability in exploring their field of interest.

Some 25 internationally recognized scientists and engineers served as editors. They helped in selecting the topical coverage and choosing the over 260 authors who prepared the individual articles. The authors form an international group who are expert in their discipline and come from every part of the technological community spanning academia, government and industry. The editors and authors of this Encyclopedia hope that the reader finds in these pages the information needed to provide guidance in exploring and utilizing optics.

As Editor-in-Chief I would like to thank all of the topical editors, authors and the staff of Elsevier for each of their contributions. Special thanks should go Dr Martin Ruck of Elsevier who provided not only organizational skills but also technological knowledge which allowed all of the numerous loose ends to be tied.

B D Guenther
Editor-in-Chief

Guide to Use of the Encyclopedia

Structure of the Encyclopedia

The material in the Encyclopedia is arranged as a series of entries in alphabetical order. Most entries consist of several articles that deal with various aspects of a topic and are arranged in a logical sequence within an entry. Some entries comprise a single article.

To help you realize the full potential of the material in the Encyclopedia we have provided three features to help you find the topic of your choice: a Contents List, Cross-References and an Index.

1. Contents List

Your first point of reference will probably be the contents list. The complete contents lists, which appears at the front of each volume will provide you with both the volume number and the page number of the entry. On the opening page of an entry a contents list is provided so that the full details of the articles within the entry are immediately available.

Alternatively you may choose to browse through a volume using the alphabetical order of the entries as your guide. To assist you in identifying your location within the Encyclopedia a running headline indicates the current entry and the current article within that entry.

If you were looking up Optical Communication Systems the following information would be provided:

Optical Communication Systems

Contents

2. Cross-References

All of the articles in the Encyclopedia have been extensively cross-referenced.

The cross-references, which appear at the end of an article, serve three different functions. For example, at the end of the OPTICAL MICROLENSES article, cross-references are used:

i. To indicate if a topic is discussed in greater detail elsewhere.

See also

Diffraction: Fraunhofer Diffraction. **Diffractive Systems:** Aberration Correction with Diffractive Elements. **Geometrical Optics:** Aberrations; Lenses and Mirrors. **Interferometry:** Overview; Phase Measurement Interferometry.

ii. To draw the reader's attention to parallel discussions in other articles.

See also

Diffraction: Fraunhofer Diffraction. **Diffractive Systems:** Aberration Correction with Diffractive Elements. **Geometrical Optics:** Aberrations; Lenses and Mirrors. **Interferometry:** Overview; Phase Measurement Interferometry.

iii. To indicate material that broadens the discussion.

See also

Diffraction: Fraunhofer Diffraction. **Diffractive Systems:** Aberration Correction with Diffractive Elements. **Geometrical Optics:** Aberrations; Lenses and Mirrors. **Interferometry:** Overview; Phase Measurement Interferometry.

3. Index

The index will provide you with the page number where the material is located, and the index entries differentiate between material that is a whole article, is part of an article or is data presented in a figure or table. Detailed notes are provided on the opening page of the index.

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