

*An analysis of public policy issues and how they affect MRS members and the materials community...*

## CMMP Report Illustrates Impact of Materials Physics on Society

In the spring of 1996, the National Research Council's Board on Physics and Astronomy established the Committee on Condensed Matter and Materials Physics (CMMP) to prepare a scholarly assessment of the field as part of a new decadal physics survey. The work of the committee began with a two-day workshop in Washington in June 1996. This workshop brought together some 60 leading practitioners in the field as well as key policymakers from government, industry, and universities. Since then, the committee has met several times to formulate its report, which is to be completed by June 1998.

The Committee has just issued a short report, *The Physics of Materials: How Science Improves Our Lives*, as an early output of the ongoing study. The report is intended for a broad audience and is appropriate as an aid in describing the impact of the field to nonspecialists such as teachers or policymakers. Based largely on the presentations at the June 1996 workshop, it highlights some of the fundamental science at the forefront of research in the field and demonstrates, through illustrative examples, the field's impact on society.

The report includes a chapter on "Technology in Daily Life," which presents a brief story about life today in the United States. It is fiction, but millions of episodes like it occur every day. Each event involves familiar technologies whose present state of development—or very existence—would have seemed extraordinary just a generation ago. The story contains links to sidebars that provide information about

some of these technologies.

The next chapter is entitled "The Research Endeavor" which discusses the fundamental scientific challenges of research in this field, again with sidebars providing more information on a few selected topics. The final chapter on "An Era of Change" describes some of the challenges faced by condensed matter and materials physics in light of the end of the

Cold War, the information technology revolution, and globalization of the economy.

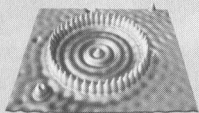
The report is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/enter2.cgi?NI000666.html>. Copies are also available from the Board on Physics and Astronomy National Research Council, HA 562, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418; phone 800-624-6242 or 202-334-3313; [bpa@nas.edu](mailto:bpa@nas.edu).

For more information, see previous Public Affairs Forum articles:

- "Workshop Identifies Opportunities for Materials Researchers," Julia M. Phillips, *MRS Bulletin* 21, No. 8, August 1996
- "Condensed Matter and Materials Physics Study Seeks Community Input," Venkatesh Narayanamurti, *MRS Bulletin* 22, No. 6, June 1997

These articles are also available on the World Wide Web [http://www.mrs.org/public\\_affairs/editorials/](http://www.mrs.org/public_affairs/editorials/)

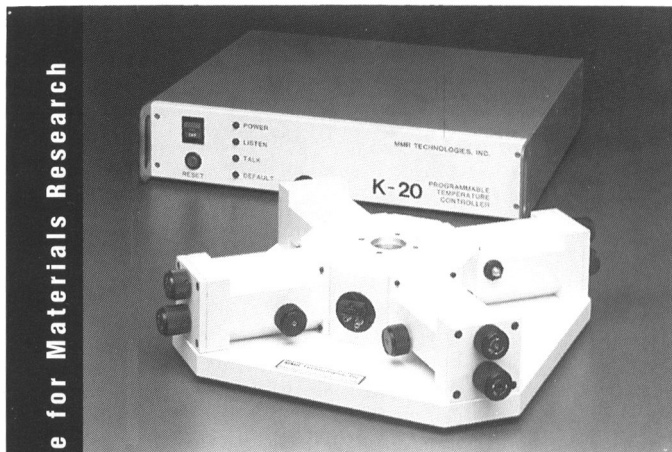
THE PHYSICS OF MATERIALS



How Science Improves Our Lives

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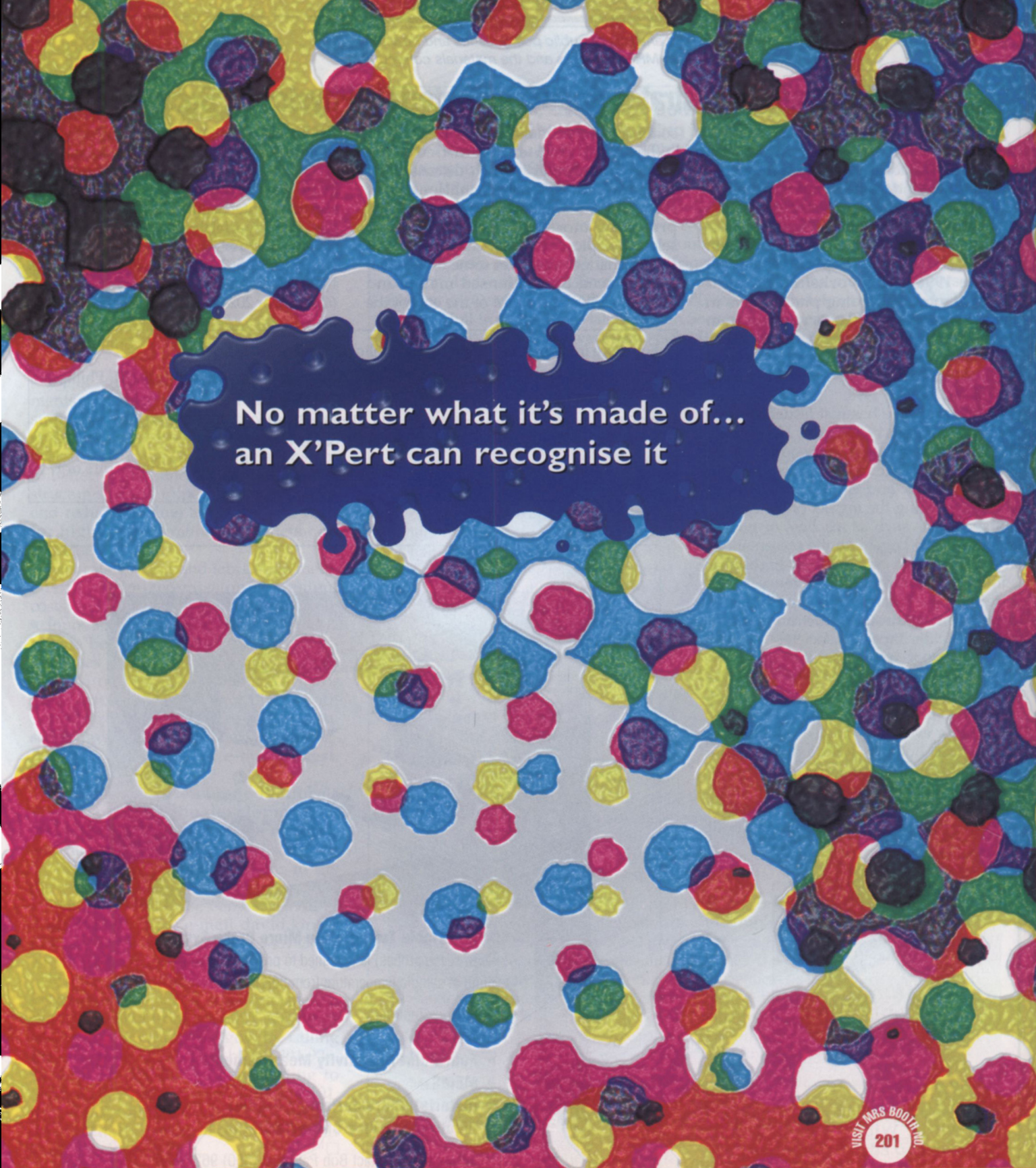


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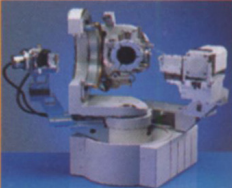
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