

Tip of the month - Feb 2019

Module planning tools

At the last Area Group meeting we looked at software that allowed members to convert a circuit diagram into a working module layout on stripboard or on a PCB.

You find a schematic in a magazine or on the internet and fancy building one. You could work it all out on paper – or you could use computer software to make the task easier.

Here are some suggestions for suitable software.

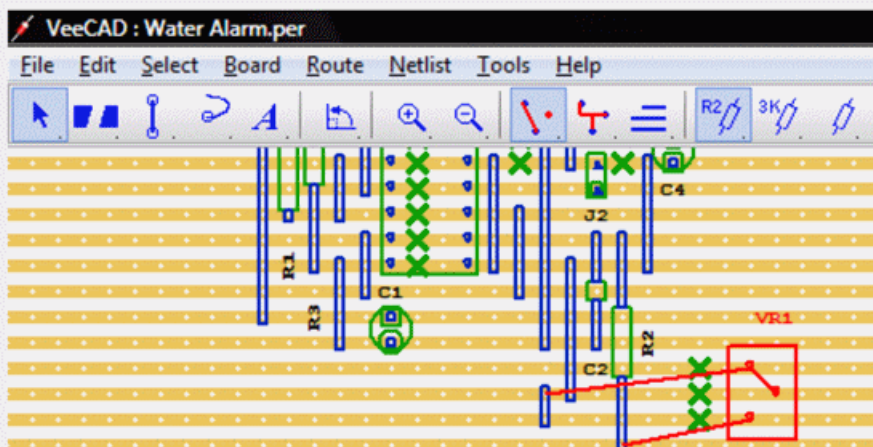
Stripboard planning software

For a one-off or for experimental purposes, stripboard (sometimes known as Veroboard) is the best approach.

Here are some links to stripboard planners.

<https://veecad.com>

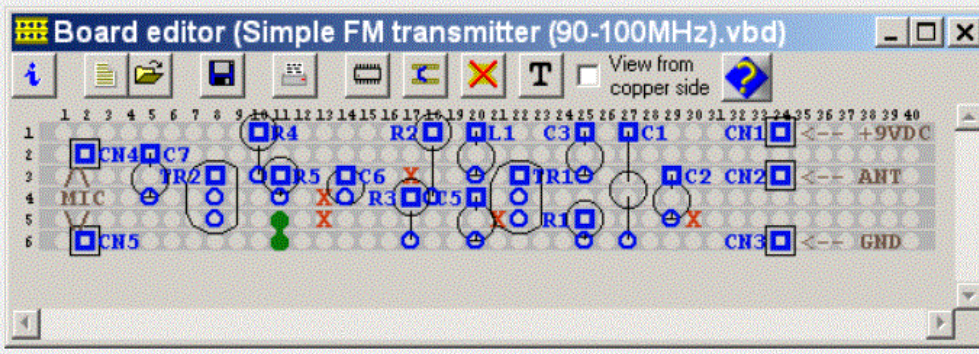
VeeCAD Stripboard Editor – Design your electronic circuits on stripboards. StripBoard Designer makes it easy to break strips, jump wires and place components on stripboards. You can even draw your own components and save them in a library for reuse.



The freeware version is black and white only, while the colour version is US \$26.26.

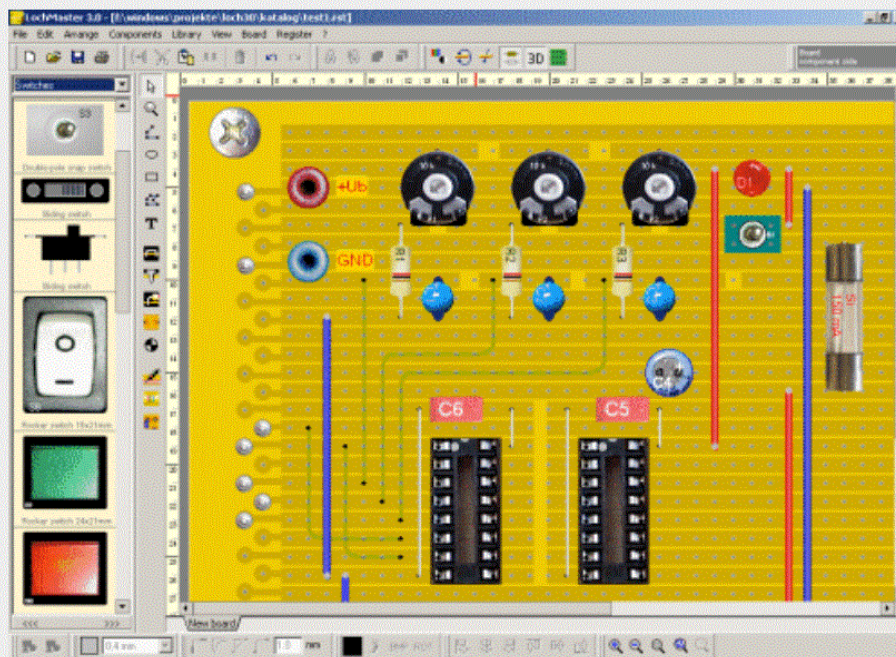
www.heyrick.co.uk/software/verodes/

VeroDes – is an easy-to-use design program for those wishing to design circuits on veroboard, also known as stripboard. With VeroDes you can: create veroboard circuit designs with ease! Board sizes up to 70 holes by 70 tracks can easily be accommodated, view both sides of your circuit; with links, breaks, and component pins clearly marked in either view, print the circuit in a variety of ways and you can create your own components, up to 25 pins by 25 pins.



<https://www.crownhill.co.uk/01354.html>

LochMaster – is a developers tool for strip board projects. It has features like auto-generation of components lists, a connection test, an editable library with a large number of symbols and components. LochMaster displays views of both sides of the board and both sides are editable. All required functions, like wiring, splitting tracks, soldering, placing components, etc. are included and very realistic.



Currently selling at £45.50.

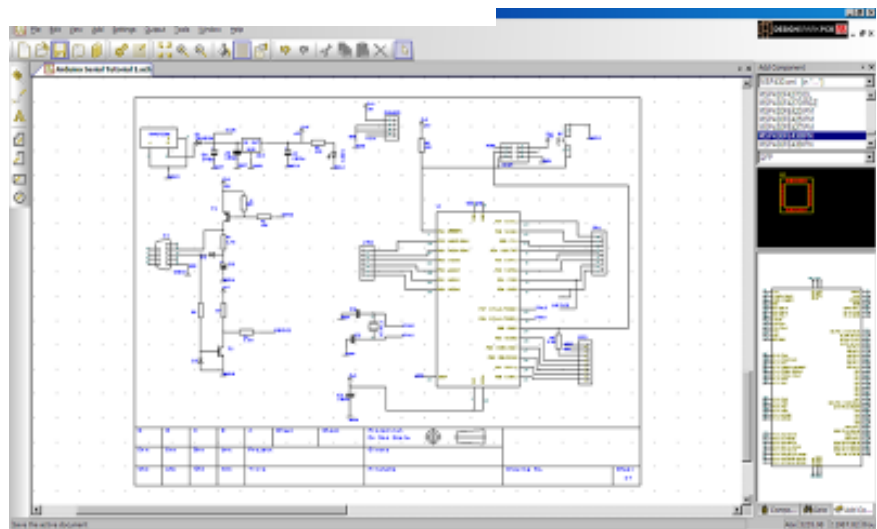
PCB planning software

If you want to make multiple copies of your module, you can design your own PCB and have boards produced for you. Here are some popular software applications.

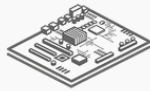
DesignSpark PCB

rs-online.com/designspark/pcb-software

DesignSpark PCB is a free electronics design software, Although there is no charge for the software, the user must register with the website to unlock the program and it displays advertisements which must be acknowledged before the user can begin working. [More at Wikipedia](#)



<https://www.autodesk.com/products/eagle/compare>



EAGLE Free

Limited PCB design software for hobbyists and makers.

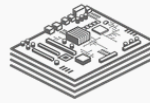
Free

WHAT YOU GET:

- 2 schematic sheets
- 2 signal or plane layers

USE FOR:

- Hobbyist breadboarding and learning electronics
- Single-sided or double-sided layer PCB layouts
- Basic schematics



EAGLE Standard

Powerful enough for your everyday engineering needs with plenty of board space.

\$100.00 /year

WHAT YOU GET:

- 99 schematic sheets
- 4 signal or plane layers

USE FOR:

- Product designs and basic electronics
- Multilayer PCB layouts
- Multisheet schematics
- Building and managing library content (individual)

KiCad

kicad-pcb.org

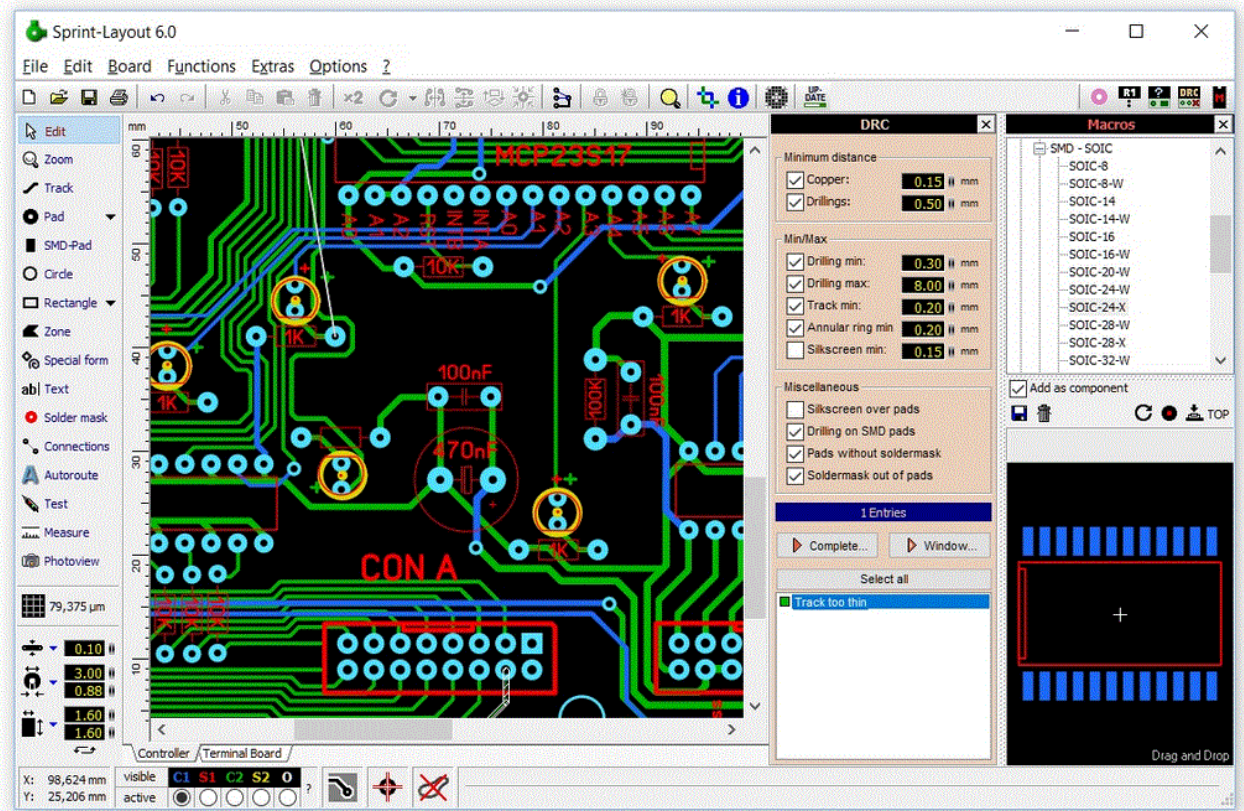


KiCad is a free software suite for electronic design automation. It facilitates the design of schematics for electronic circuits and their conversion to PCB designs. KiCad was originally developed by Jean-Pierre Charras. It features an integrated environment for schematic capture and PCB layout design. Tools exist within the package to create a bill of materials, artwork, Gerber files, and 3D views of the PCB and its components. [More at Wikipedia](#)

<https://www.crownhill.co.uk/01353.html>

Sprint Layout 6.0

Sprint-Layout - this software is getting more and more famous. If you need a software to design your PCB's easy and fast, you can't get away from Sprint-Layout! Many thousand satisfied users can't be mistaken. Sprint-Layout with its marvellous handling is simply unbeatable! There isn't any "ballast" making it difficult to keep the overview. The logical and understandable structure of Sprint-Layout is very easy to learn. You can concentrate to the essential thing: The optimized PCB design.



Currently selling at £40.