



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Peak Products Save Tech Time

By Mark Parthe

[October 2009] Adding the right piece of test gear to an engineer's arsenal usually makes him more efficient in troubleshooting problems. Finding a good, lightweight product that works well at modest cost is the best of all possible worlds. Mark Parthe has found something you should consider for your toolbox.

Some of us engineers still do component service on broadcast and other analog gear. Most of the time, we utilize the usual DVM's and general test equipment. But once in awhile a really cool piece of test gear comes along that makes a difference.

For checking solid state components nothing beats the Atlas DCA model DCA55, one of several diagnostic tools from Peak Electronic Design Ltd.

QUICK CHECKING

I have had the older model for several years and this new one is really great. It will quickly identify the type of component and give you detailed information on the device.

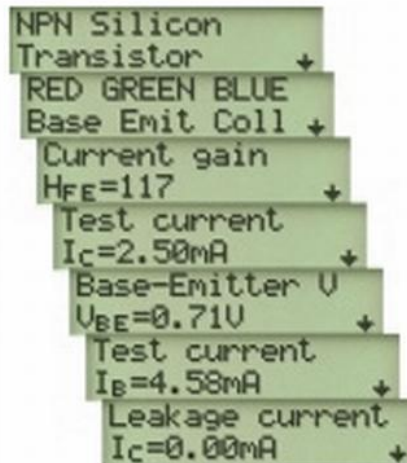
Want to identify an unknown component? All it takes is to just clip the leads to your LED, bipolar devices, FET, MOSFETs, SCR's and Triacs and press the "on - test" button. Immediately, the DCA55 identifies the device.



The Peak Atlas DCA55 automatically identifies the device under test.

If the part is good, the DCA55 will tell you so. If the part is bad it will tell you it cannot find the part or displays a message that it is a diode or an open bipolar device. The only drawback is that the part must be out of circuit for accurate readings.

Depending upon the device being tested, it will report the type, features, pinout, and measured parameters like gain, leakage test current, gate threshold voltages, volt drops, etc.



The DCA55 reports detailed information on scrollable pages

Just clip the leads on in any order and press ON. The DCA55 finds the proper pinout and tells you what each lead is.



The lead identification

The DCA55 will save you tons of time. The only place I have found to purchase this great time saver in the US was MCM Electronics, the part number is 22-8242 (the MCM catalog shows a white case but mine came in a red case). A recent price was \$135. Get one today, you will never regret it.

On the other hand, if you do not mind ordering direct from the manufacturer in England, check out the Peak website at www.peakelec.co.uk A quick check while preparing this article shows the unit is available at approximately, \$79, plus \$10 shipping.

Mark Parthe is the owner of Arizona Broadcast Service, based in Prescott, AZ, and has been in the electronic service business for 31 years. Contact Mark at ABS@afaz.net

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