
Lectures on Superconductivity Available Online

A project to produce video Lectures on Superconductivity, featuring contributions from leading world experts in academia and industry, was announced in 2002 by the European Network for Superconductivity, SCENET-2. This project was led by Dr Bartek Glowacki, University of Cambridge, and received financial support from SCENET-2, Pi-Shift and the European Science Foundation.

Finally the editing process has been completed, and the Lectures on Superconductivity are available free of charge online at: <http://www.msm.cam.ac.uk/ascg/lectures/>

Although the films are available online, this is an on-going project to educate students and to celebrate the centenary of the discovery of superconductivity in 1911. Dr Glowacki and his colleagues in Cambridge aim to gradually add supporting text, questions, and links to further reading and related videos, for each film. It is also hoped that films can eventually be updated, and coverage of some subjects increased, as the opportunity arises.

Each film can be streamed straight from the website in a choice of formats. The highest-quality option, shown by default, is RealMedia, but Windows Media, QuickTime and two variants of Flash are also available, so almost everyone should be able to watch the films without the need to install any extra software. A page has also been provided with links to download suitable media players, and to record your preferred format so that it is used on every visit: <http://www.msm.cam.ac.uk/ascg/lectures/introduction/players.php>

Each film can also be downloaded in a choice of formats. The highest quality option, H.264, can be played in QuickTime and is of sufficient quality to show using a screen or projector. This format is also optimised to be copied to Apple's iPod portable players; the files are sufficiently small that the entire series of films would fit on the lowest-capacity iPod, or on a single DVD. The Windows Media version is almost as good, and is convenient for keeping a copy on a Windows PC; the QuickTime movie (*.mov) should only be chosen if storage space or download speeds are a significant concern.

Streaming and downloads are a more convenient and flexible form of distribution than DVD for many users, and presentation on the website will allow material to be quickly added to improve the teaching value of the Lectures. Contributions of supporting material from the superconductivity community are now being sought. Questions and solutions suitable for final year undergraduates or first-year graduate students – whether numerical, multiple choice or open-ended – would be very gratefully received. Any video clips, pictures, presentations or other documents you think would enhance the lectures would also be welcomed. Please send your comments and contributions by e-mail to los@msm.cam.ac.uk