

## Re: Learning schematic layout – Orcard or PADS?

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.cad/2005-06/msg00059.html>

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- *From:* James Morrison <[spam1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:spam1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 07 Jun 2005 08:50:14 -0400
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Andy,

If you just want to learn about PCB layout then there are much cheaper options than PADS or Orcad. I use Cadsoft Eagle and I like it. It takes a bit of getting used to but its not bad. Its really no different than any other system I've used: Once you know how to do things its pretty good. It has some limitations but for the price you can't beat it. There are also various license arrangements from free to the full blown professional. There is a not-for-profit license that you would qualify for if you're just tinkering around.

I'm not sure that you will be able to avoid learning PCB design if you want to do layout. That's sort of like saying you want to drive but you don't want to study to get a license. Sure in the end you may be able to point the car somewhere at you'll probably move if you know just a little bit. But the results will be less than desirable. If your PCB isn't designed correctly you can completely negate a well designed FPGA or ASIC and cause the whole assembly to not even function.

There are other free packages out there as well that will allow you to learn. Someone has a list of over 60 packages that are reviewed and linked. I can't recall off the top of my head but its been posted either here or in sci.electronics.design. Try google to find it.

Cheers.

On Tue, 2005-06-07 at 03:41 -0700, [andy@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:andy@xxxxxxxxxxxx) wrote:

- > Hi All,
- >
- > I'm a VHDL designer (of sorts) using FPGA's. Short of specifying pin
- > outs for FPGA's I haven't got involved in board level layout, so far...
- >
- > I'm thinking of taking the plunge and buying Orcad or PADS, but as
- > these are both expensive packages, I'd like to know first, just how
- > difficult is schematic layout at the board level?
- >
- > What areas of knowledge do I have to learn? Primarily I'm designing PCI
- > cards.
- >

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- > I don't want to learn PCB design, that certainly seems to be a large
- > area best left to experts! But I think being able to do my own layouts
- > will save me some money... providing it's not too difficult and doesn't
- > take a long time to learn.
- >
- > Any advice would be great.
- >
- > Thanks,
- >
- > Andy

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- **Follow-Ups:**

- ◆ **Re: Learning schematic layout – Orcard or PADS?**  
◇ From: Terry Pinnell

- **References:**

- ◆ **Learning schematic layout – Orcard or PADS?**  
◇ From: andy

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