PROCEEDINGS OF SPIE

High-Power Diode Laser Technology XVI

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Editor

29–30 January 2018
San Francisco, California, United States

Sponsored and Published by
SPIE

Volume 10514

Proceedings of SPIE 0277-786X, V. 10514

High-Power Diode Laser Technology XVI, edited by Mark S. Zediker, Proc. of SPIE Vol. 10514,
1051401 · © 2018 SPIE · CCC code: 0277-786X/18/$18 · doi: 10.1117/12.2322760

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Please use the following format to cite material from these proceedings:
Author(s), "Title of Paper," in *High-Power Diode Laser Technology XVI*, edited by Mark S. Zediker, Proceedings of SPIE Vol. 10514 (SPIE, Bellingham, WA, 2018) Seven-digit Article CID Number.

ISSN: 0277-786X
ISSN: 1996-756X (electronic)

ISBN: 9781510615137
ISBN: 9781510615144 (electronic)

Published by
SPIE
P.O. Box 10, Bellingham, Washington 98227-0010 USA
Telephone +1 360 676 3290 (Pacific Time) · Fax +1 360 647 1445
SPIE.org

Printed in the United States of America.

Publication of record for individual papers is online in the SPIE Digital Library.

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Introduction

This year the conference was expanded to start the conversation on the new high power blue laser diode technology which is emerging as a new tool for the industrial markets. The conference included several talks on the new high power blue products aimed at welding copper and other materials with high reflectivity in the IR compared to the blue. Attendance was standing room only and discussions were filled with questions about the technology and its applications. We plan to expand this section of the conference next year and expect a number of new companies to join the development of this new and exciting technology.

The high-power IR laser diode talks also did not disappoint, the march to higher and higher brightness laser diode products continue. The results were best summarized in a talk by nLIGHT Corporation (United States) where they plotted the improvement in brightness as a function of time. The brightness of the diode laser product line have now eclipsed the brightness of high power lamp pumped solid state lasers and are starting to challenge the multi-mode diode pumped solid state lasers. Higher power bars, better cooling methods and better micro-optics were all part of the conference as well.

Mark S. Zediker