UI licenses flex electronics technology

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The University of Illinois-Champaign has signed a licensing agreement regarding the development of flexible, stretchable and printable electronic circuitry.

The agreement with Semprius Inc., the university said, heralds what might be a world-changing technology in flexible circuitry.

The new technology is the result of research by two University of Illinois professors of materials science, engineering and chemistry -- Ralph Nuzzo and John Rogers -- providing the groundwork for a platform technology that is designed to enable multiple applications across diverse markets.

Semprius is preparing to make large-scale, high-performance flexible and stretchable electronic circuits that can be applied to any surface. Among other things, the process can reportedly even produce rubber gloves with built-in sensors that could be used by surgeons.

The fabrication technology -- developed by Rogers, the company's president and co-founder -- uses a two-step process: First, electronic devices are formed on a semiconductor wafer using conventional techniques, then an extremely thin layer that contains the complete transistor is lifted from the wafer and printed onto nearly any material, including plastic, glass, metal or other semiconductors.

The company's motto is "High Performance Semiconductors Anywhere."