

CASE STUDY

Optimizing Data Center Efficiency with ECM PCB Stator Motors

The increasing demand for data centers worldwide has led to a surge in energy consumption. Cooling systems account for 37% of the energy they use.¹

As data centers strive to improve efficiency, lower costs, and align with sustainability goals, the motor systems within their cooling mechanisms play a crucial role.

SUMMARY

Traditional motor solutions often fall short in addressing energy efficiency, weight, modularity, and supply chain diversification. Optimizing for one design criteria may come at the cost of another. With the capabilities of PrintStator and ECM PCB Stator motors, customers can strategize their design around many parameters. This case study highlights the impacts of ECM technologies in advancing data center operations.

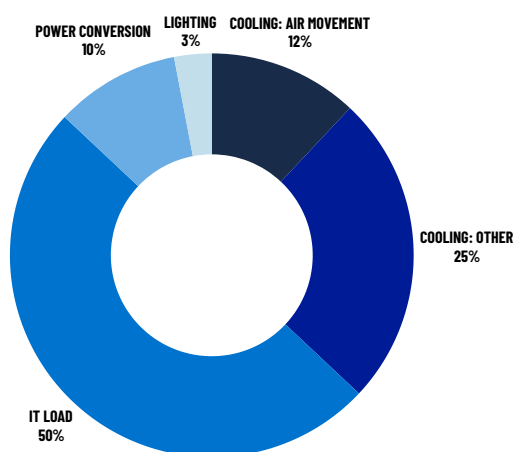


Figure 1: Breakdown of Data Center Power Usage ⁱ

CHALLENGES IN DATA CENTER EFFICIENCY

Energy Consumption

Data centers consumed 130 TWh of electricity in 2022, accounting for 2.5% of total U.S. energy usage. This figure is projected to triple by 2030.ⁱⁱ Cooling systems alone are responsible for 37% of this energy usage, making them a critical area for efficiency improvements.ⁱⁱⁱ

The growth of data centers is outpacing the additional deployment of energy they need from utility companies. Premium efficiency motors, like ECM's PCB Stator motors, play a critical role in addressing this gap by reducing the overall power demand of cooling systems. Data center designers can optimize their operations within the existing energy provision rather than requesting costly upgrades from utilities. In retrofit scenarios, improved efficiency across arrays of cooling fans can further alleviate the need for additional power, reducing strain on the electrical grid infrastructure.

Reliability and Downtime Costs

Data centers require continuous operation from an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to maintain uptime and avoid financial losses from downtime. Power outages, which usually stem from the UPS, account for 43% of downtime for data centers.^{iv} Traditional motors often fall short in reliability and redundancy, posing significant risks and burdens if unable to properly cool data center electronics.

Material and Resource Constraints

Copper, which is essential for motor manufacturing, faces increasing demand and skyrocketing prices due to electrification trends. The market price of copper has risen from \$6,400/ton to \$9,000/ton in four years.^v ECM PCB Stator motors use up to 80% less copper than a traditional iron-core, radial-flux motor by eliminating winding inefficiencies and harnessing the advancements of PCB manufacturing capabilities.^{vi}

Design and Operational Inefficiencies

- Off-the-shelf motor solutions limit customization, leaving many businesses unable to optimize motors for specific operational conditions.

- Many traditional motors require active cooling systems, increasing weight and size while reducing overall efficiency.
- Inefficient heat dissipation in conventional motors often leads to higher operating temperatures, which risk damage to data center servers.

Speed, Vibration, and EMI Management

Data centers rely on precise speed control of cooling fans for optimal performance and to reduce unnecessary power expenditures. They must also manage system vibrations and electromagnetic interference (EMI) to protect sensitive equipment.^{vii} During operation, the copper windings of traditional motors vibrate and create unwanted electromagnetic interactions. These forces can be disruptive and lead to noise and mechanical wear. ECM PCB Stator technology substantially reduces motor EMI and vibrations by encapsulating the copper windings in the fiberglass substrate of the PCB.

Shipping and Maintenance Cost

The shipping cost and transportation emissions of electric motors depend on their weight and volume. Replacement and maintenance in the field requires more labor for heavier and bulkier motors. ECM PCB Stator motors are substantially lighter than traditional motors, due to eliminating unnecessary copper weight and cooling elements. The thinner package of these motors also allows for easier transportation and alleviates complex maintenance situations.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN DATA CENTER EFFICIENCY

ECM vs. Competitors

A comparative analysis of ECM PCB Stator 3.7kW motor against Infinitum's Aircore EC and ABB's CTM3665T highlights ECM's advantages in key performance metrics:

Metric	ECM	Infinitum ^{viii}	ABB ^{ix}
Power	3.7kW	3.7kW	3.7kW
Speed	1800 RPM	1800 RPM	1800 RPM
Efficiency	IE5	IE5	IE5
Length (mm)	138	221	347
Diameter (mm)	362	417	303
Weight (kg)	22.2	41.5	45.4
kW per kg	0.17	0.09	0.08
kW per m ³	261	114	148
Air Shipping Cost*	0.50	0.95	1.00
Ground Shipping Cost*	0.35	0.95	1.00
Ocean LCL Cost*	0.41	0.93	1.00

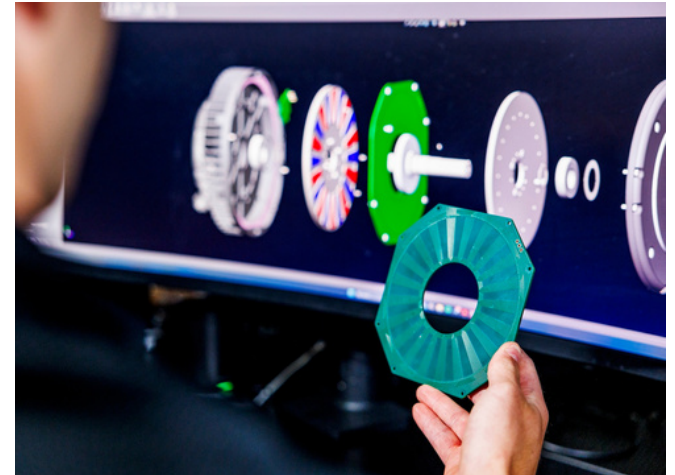
Table 1: Side-by-side comparison to Infinitum and ABB

* **Note:** Shipping costs are represented as percentages relative to ABB's motor shipping costs, with ABB set as the baseline at 100%. For example, ECM's air shipping cost is 50% of ABB's, while Infinitum's is 95%.

UNIQUE ADVANTAGES OF ECM'S PCB STATOR MOTORS

Customizability with PrintStator

ECM's PrintStator software enables businesses to design motors tailored to their specific operational needs, ensuring optimal performance and efficiency. Businesses can design their motors around their systems rather than adapting their systems to fit the motor.



Lightweight and Compact Design

- ECM's PCB Stator motors weigh nearly 50% less than Infinitum's and ABB's solutions due to the lack of iron in the core and absence of active cooling systems, thanks to patented thermal heat pipe technology.
- A key benefit of ECM's PCB Stator technology is its lightweight design. Traditional electric motors can easily exceed the safe manual handling weight limits defined by safety regulations. According to many occupational health and safety guidelines, 25 kg (approximately 55 lbs) is the maximum weight one person should lift without mechanical assistance. Exceeding this threshold increases the risk of injury and often necessitates multiple personnel or lifting equipment, driving up labor costs.^x
- Compact form factors reduce shipping costs and improve ease of installation.

Increased Energy Flexibility for Data Centers

ECM's motors enable data centers to maximize the energy available within their allocated capacity. This is particularly valuable in regions where utilities face delays in deploying new power infrastructure. Improved energy efficiency across cooling systems ensures that data centers can expand operations without incurring additional power upgrade requests or delays, allowing for faster scalability.

Continuous Operation

ECM motors are designed for robust, continuous operation, ensuring high reliability and minimizing downtime risks in mission-critical environments like data centers.

Efficient Heat Dissipation

ECM's patented thermal management solutions effectively dissipate heat without additional cooling systems, improving reliability and energy efficiency.

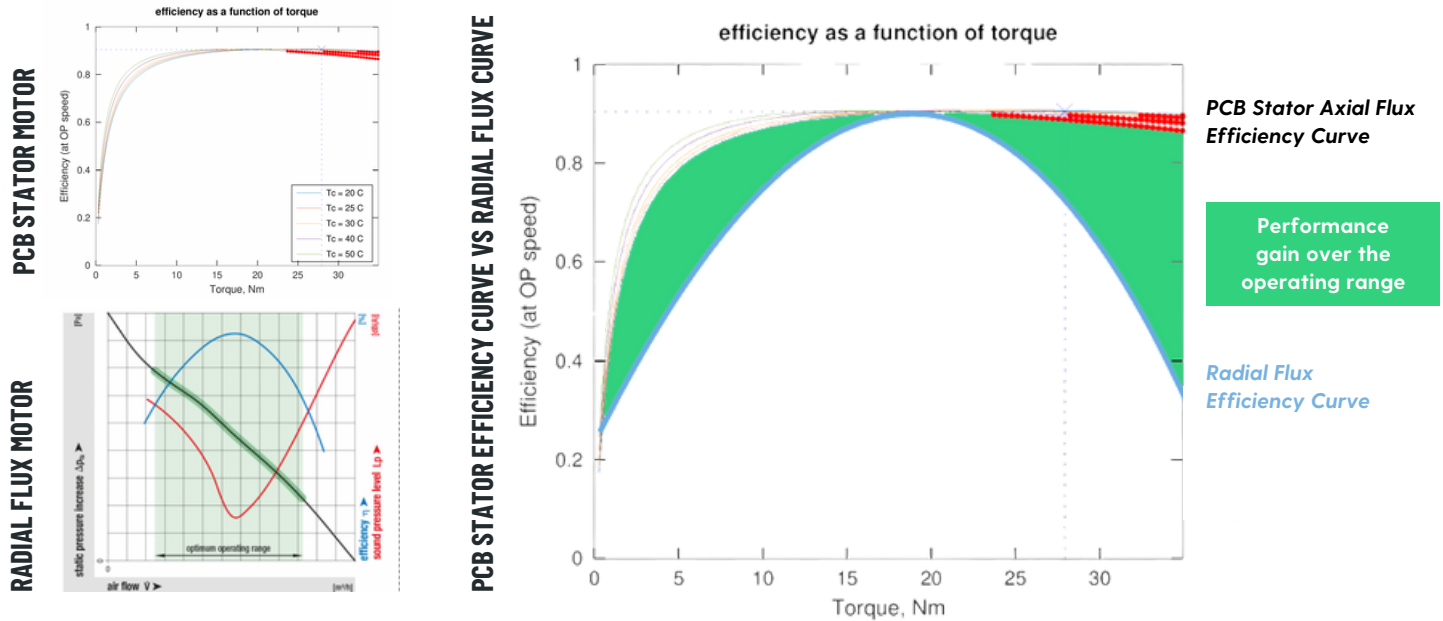


Figure 2: Axial vs. Radial Flux Efficiency Comparison

Precision and Vibration Management

- ECM motors provide precise speed control for optimal data center performance.
- Enclosed composite structures in ECM coils reduce acoustic noise and vibrations caused by forces acting on conventional stator windings.
- ECM's zero-cogging motors eliminate mechanical excitation of connected structures, addressing a key source of noise and vibration in traditional motors.

Ease of Maintenance

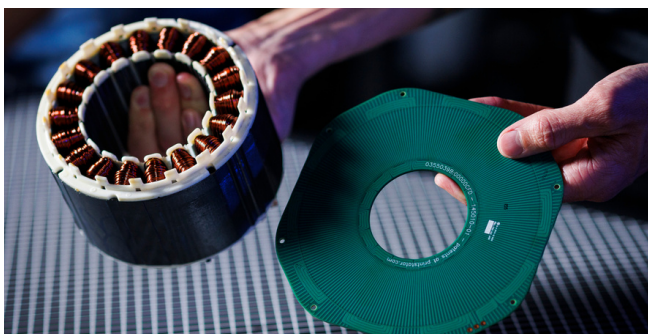
- ECM's lightweight solutions enable easier access and handling during maintenance.
- Modular designs allow for single-component replacements, reducing downtime and labor costs.

Flat Efficiency Curve (2)

ECM motors maintain high efficiency across a wide range of operating conditions, optimizing performance at off-peak times and reducing energy consumption.

Sustainability

- With ECM's flexible customization, motors can be designed to exact operating points and curves, meaning less power wasted during operation.
- ECM's PCB Stator design uses up to 80% less copper and other raw materials than traditional motors, addressing supply chain constraints and reducing environmental impact.



- ECM's lightweight motors reduce building structural requirements, specifically when used in fan arrays in data centers and other air-moving applications.
- ECM's rotor design allows for easy recycling of magnets, supporting sustainability goals.
- As ECM's technology removes the requirement for traditional motor winding lines, more businesses are taking control of their supply chains and assembling the motors in their facilities alongside their current production lines, leading to better control and eliminating shipping costs of heavy motors between facilities.

CONCLUSION

The rapid growth of data centers demands innovative solutions to address rising energy costs, the divergence between energy supply growth and demand growth, environmental pressures, and supply chain challenges. ECM's PCB Stator motors offer a compelling alternative to traditional motor systems by delivering superior efficiency, sustainability, and adaptability. By enabling data centers to operate efficiently within existing utility provisions, ECM motors not only reduce energy costs but also support the sector's rapid expansion. With advancements in customization, reliability, heat dissipation, and vibration management, ECM PCB Stator motors are the ideal choice for modern data centers.

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