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Near-Field Scanning Optical Microscopy Measures Diode Beam Properties

Astigmatism is a problem for laser diodes, and even after applying correctional optics, residual astigmatism (a few microns) remains because of laser-to-laser variations. In addition, temperature and pump current variations may affect astigmatism and other beam properties. Knife-edge techniques with mathematical processing can produce reasonably accurate assessments of beam parameters, but researchers at **Boston University** and the **IBM Research Center** in Switzerland wrote in *Applied Physics Letters* that they can produce very high resolution direct lateral and axial diode laser beam profile and astigmatism measurements using near-field scanning optical microscopy. The group used the near-field tip to collect an InGaAs diode output at various heights above the facet. ■

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