



Adaptive facade network – Europe

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TU Delft for the COST Action 1403 adaptive facade network

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41 Smart Envelopes for the Mediterranean Area. The new façade system in the ICT Centre in Lucca

► Marco Sala and Rosa Romano, Department of Architecture, University of Florence



► Research information

Abstract

The research project Smart Envelope, developed at ABITA Research Centre, analyses the evolution of smart façade systems in the area of design and industrial production, in order to investigate the technological, functional and qualitative standards of dynamic façades and to evaluate energy performances of the building envelope as a dynamic system that is able to interact with indoor and outdoor space. The study is focused, in particular, on the DOMINO facade, a dynamic envelope developed to improve the energy performances and the indoor comfort in office buildings located in Southern Europe.

Technological features

The DOMINO facade is a modular “dry assembled” system made with an aluminium frame, divided in an opaque and a transparent module. The modules consist of fixed and mobile layers: an aluminium-shading device, a glass panel and a metallic mosquito net that can be moved, with automatic or manual controls, from the opaque module in front of the transparent module.

The modularity of the components allows customizing the facade to fulfil the structural, energy-related and aesthetic requirements. In order to change the image and the energy performance of the façade different types of panels (made with PV, metal, glass, terracotta, etc.) can be integrated in the opaque module.

Furthermore the modularity of the frame and the possibility to move the three dynamic layers located in the opaque module, guarantees to change the energy performance of the façade during the year's seasons:

- In winter, the mobile glass panel is placed in front of the transparent module in order to realize a buffer zone and to increase the transmittance value of transparent and opaque panels.

- In summer: the mobile panel with the shading device is placed in front of the transparent module in order to decrease overheating inside of the building. During the night, the mosquito net is located in front of the operable window to increase air change by night cooling.

Energy simulations

We have simulated the energy performance of the facade system using the thermodynamic software TRNSYS. The energy simulations were done based on placing the façade system in a virtual test room with a size of 5,00 x 5,00 x 3,00 m and analysing the energy requirement of primary energy for heating and cooling in three different climatic zones in Italy (Milan, Florence and Palermo) and for four cardinal directions (East, South, West and North).

The simulations have shown that:

- In winter months the smart facade should be oriented toward the south to improve the solar heat gains and decrease the energy consumption for heating by at least 5%.

- In summer months the smart facade should be oriented south or north to reduce the thermal loads and the solar heat gains and decrease the energy consumption for cooling. During the summer day, the possibility to remove the glass panel from the transparent module allows to reduce the energy consumptions by 70 %, compared to a traditional double skin façade.

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► **Time span:** 2007 - 2012

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► Associated Publications:

1. ROMANO R., (2011) Smart Skin Envelope. Integrazione architettonica di tecnologie dinamiche e innovative per il risparmio energetico, Florence University Press, Firenze.
2. MARCO SALA, ROSA ROMANO, (2013), Innovative Dynamic Building Component For The Mediterranean Area, in *International Scientific Conference CLEANTECH FOR SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS FROM NANO TO URBAN SCALE CISBAT 2013*, Lausanne, Switzerland, 4-6 September 2013, pp. 267-272



► **Fig. 1:** The Domino facade was used in the construction of the south and east façades of the New Centre in virtual environments and ICT of Lucca Chamber of Commerce.



► **Fig. 2:** The south façade of the ICT in Lucca. In this case, three PV panels generating an electrical energy production of 0.30 kWp are integrated into the opaque module of the DOMINO façade.



► **Fig. 3:** The smart façade prototype was realized by DAVINI, an Italian Tuscan company. The façade system has a thermal break frame by Schueco and glass panels by Pilkington.