

Until I get a chance to write a full user guide, here's an edited copy of my initial release posting to the FreePCB forum:

FpcRef is a panelization cosmetic preprocessor that replaces component refdes strings with text. This is done by adding text strings that duplicates each refdes and hiding the real refdeses by setting both the height and stroke width to zero. The original refdes values, though invisible, are unchanged. Each .fpc file processed results in a new file being created with "_ref" appended to the file name, the original file is unchanged. For example demo.fpc produces demo_ref.fpc. Refdes text should only consist of normally printable characters (code 0x20 - 0x7e). Characters outside this range may cause text location error on bottom side test.

FpcRef is a Win2K/XP console (command line) application. Extract the executable to a handy directory and, if needed, update the PATH environment variable.

The command syntax is simply the executable name followed by one or more .fpc file names. If a file name contains any spaces, the whole name must be enclosed in quotes. If the name includes an extension, the name is used as is. If no extension is present, **.fpc** is appended.

Ex:

```
D:\Code\FpcROUTE\RefTest>fpcref "text test" demo          ← user input in dark red

      FpcRef - A FreePCB Post Layout RefDes Converter
              Ver 1.01R (c)2007 Bruce Parham

File "text test.fpc" loaded, 758 lines read.
File "text test_ref.fpc" created
  34 Component RefRes strings hidden in text test_ref.fpc

File "demo.fpc" loaded, 1168 lines read.
File "demo_ref.fpc" created
  25 Component RefRes strings hidden in demo_ref.fpc

Done.
  2 files loaded.
  2 files created
```

and regarding debug mode:

Debug places the new text on a pair of inner layers and only sets the ref text stroke to zero while leaving the height unchanged. This results in the new text appearing under the original. The new text is placed on the "inner 1" and "inner 2" layers so, for debug to function, the board must have at least four layers. If debug mode is on and a board is found to have less than 4 layers, debug is disabled for that board and the message "Board only has n layers, debug disabled" is displayed.

Debug mode is enabled by entering **-D** or **-d** as the first parameter, before any file names.

Ex.: **fpcref -d "text test" demo2**

Bruce