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Investigation of the factors influencing the wettability of conducting polymers for fluid control in microfluidic devices

Jenny Halldorsson
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**INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS
INFLUENCING THE WETTABILITY OF
CONDUCTING POLYMERS FOR
FLUID CONTROL IN MICROFLUIDIC DEVICES**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

JENNY HALLDORSSON, BSc (Hons)

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

August, 2007

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer A. Halldorsson, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for any qualifications at any other academic institution.

Jenny Halldorsson

August 2007

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PUBLICATIONS

Causley, J. A., Stitzel, S., Brady, S., Diamond, D. and Wallace, G. G. Electrochemically-induced fluid movement using polypyrrole, *Synthetic Metals*, 151 (2005) 60–64.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Halldorsson, J. A., Spinks, G. M., Brown, H. and Wallace, G. G. Investigation of contact angle, wettability and surface energy of polyterthiophenes for fluid control in microfluidic devices. *Higher Degree Research Students Conference* (oral presentation), University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia, 2006.

Causley, J. A., Spinks, G. M. and Wallace, G. G. Investigation of conducting polymers for fluid control in microfluidic systems. *Connect* (oral presentation), Sydney, Australia, 2005.

Causley, J. A., Spinks, G. M., Diamond, D. and Wallace, G. G. Fluid control in microfluidic devices using polypyrrole. *Gordon Research Conference on The Physics and Chemistry of Microfluidics* (poster presentation), Magdlen College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2005.

ABSTRACT

The advent of miniaturised analytical systems has the potential to revolutionise the way in which chemical and biological analyses are made, due to the benefits of reduced reagent consumption, increased sensitivity and decreased analysis times. With increasingly smaller device dimensions comes the need for more efficient methods of controlling fluid flow on the microscale. Electrokinetic techniques, such as electrophoresis and electroosmosis, are well suited for delivering analytes and reagents in microfluidic devices, however high driving voltages and power requirements limit the size to which the device may be miniaturised and thus limit the applicability of these flow control methods for portable, hand-held devices. In order to overcome this limitation, an elegant use of surface tension forces which dominate at the microscale is necessary.

Conducting organic polymers, such as polythiophene and polypyrrole, have found widespread use in recent years due to their attractive mechanical properties and processability, in addition to their ability to be reversibly switched between oxidised (conducting) and reduced (insulating) forms. This redox switching may be accompanied by a change in polymer properties such as wettability and surface energy which may be altered dramatically upon external stimulation, commonly in the form of a small applied electrical potential.

The effect of redox switching upon conducting polymer wettability for fluid control in microfluidic devices is the central theme which was explored in this thesis. In particular, the aims of this thesis were to characterise the wettability of conducting polymers and investigate the factors which influence it, as well as explore the use of

conducting polymers for fluid control in simple, dynamically controlled microfluidic devices, based on the change in wetting properties upon *in-situ* electrochemical redox switching. The role of polymer oxidation state, film thickness, polymerisation substrate and the configuration of the electrochemical cell used for fluid control were considered. Goniometry and tensiometry were used to characterise polymer wetting properties, while microscopy techniques (scanning electron microscopy, atomic force microscopy and optical profilometry) were used to probe the morphology of polymer and understand the role of roughness on conducting polymer wettability and fluid movement. The electrochemical properties of polymers were characterised by cyclic voltammetry, while Raman spectroscopy was employed to gain insight into the role of water and film thickness in determining the oxidation state of polyterthiophene in Chapter 3.

The insights gained during polymer wettability characterisations were extended to investigate surface tension-induced fluidic control using electrochemical cells in both channel-based and droplet-based configurations upon the application of a small voltage. The knowledge gained during the course of this study should form the basis for developing devices which will contribute to interesting solutions for improving flow control on the microscale.

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATION

θ	equilibrium contact angle
θ_a	advancing contact angle
θ_r	receding contact angle
$\Delta\theta$	contact angle hysteresis; $\theta_a - \theta_r$
γ_l	surface tension of a liquid
γ_s	surface tension of a solid
γ_{sl}	surface tension of the solid-liquid interface
γ_{sv}	surface tension of the solid in equilibrium with the saturated vapour pressure of the liquid
γ^-	surface tension arising from electron donation
γ^+	surface tension arising from electron accepting
γ^{AB}	surface tension arising from acid-base interactions
γ^d	surface tension arising from dispersive interactions
γ^{Debye}	surface tension arising from Debye interactions
γ^h	surface tension arising from hydrogen bonding
γ^{Keesom}	surface tension arising from Keesom interactions
γ^{London}	surface tension arising from London interactions
γ_{lv}	surface tension of the liquid-vapour interface
γ^{LW}	surface tension arising from Lifshitz-van der Waals interactions
γ^m	surface tension arising from metallic bonding
γ^p	surface tension arising from polar interactions
γ^{total}	total surface tension
κ	electrical conductivity

μ TAS	micro total analysis systems
ρ	wetted perimeter of the sample in Wilhelmy balance tensiometry
ACN	acetonitrile
AFM	atomic force microscopy
ATR-FTIR	attenuated total reflection Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
CDG	contact drop goniometry
CEW	continuous electrowetting
CH ₂ I ₂	diiodomethane
DCM	dichloromethane
EDL	electrical double layer
EMI.TFSI	1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium bis(trifluoromethyl)sulfonylimide
EWOD	electrowetting on dielectric
f	fraction of a solid in contact with a liquid
F	weight contribution from the meniscus in Wilhelmy balance tensiometry
F _b	buoyancy force
F _g	force due to gravity
F _w	wetting force
G	free energy
GC	glassy carbon
HREELS	high-resolution electron energy loss spectroscopy
ITO	ITO-coated glass
KCl	potassium chloride
NaDBS	sodium dodecylbenzenesulfoante
NaNO ₃	sodium nitrate
NapTS	sodium <i>para</i> -toluenesulfonate

P3BT	poly-3-butylthiophene
P3HT	poly-3-hexylthiophene
P3MT	poly-3-methylthiophene
P3OT	poly-3-octylthiophene
PAn	polyaniline
PDMS	polydimethylsiloxane
PEDOT	poly-(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene)
PMMA	polymethylmethacrylate
PNiPAAM	poly(<i>N</i> -isopropylacrylamide)
PPy	polypyrrole
PPy.DBS	polypyrrole doped with dodecylbenzenesulfonate
Pt	platinum sheet
Pt-PMMA	platinised polymethylmethacrylate
Pt-PVDF	platinised PVDF membrane
PTTh.CIO ₄	polyterthiophene doped with perchlorate
PTTh-C ₆₀ .CIO ₄	N-methyl-2-(2-[2':5',2''-terthiophen-3'yl]ethenyl)fullero[3,4]pyrrolidine) doped with perchlorate
PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	poly-(4,4'-didecyloxy-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene) doped with perchlorate
PVDF	polyvinylidenedifluoride
<i>r</i>	roughness
SAM	self-assembled monolayer
SEM	scanning electron microscopy
SERS	surface enhanced Raman spectroscopy
SSIMS	static secondary ion mass spectrometry
TBA.CIO ₄	tetrabutylammonium perchlorate

TiO ₂	titanium dioxide
TPG	tilting plate goniometry
TTh	2,2':5',2''-terthiophene
TTh-C ₆₀	N-methyl-2-(2-[2':5',2''-terthiophen-3'yl]ethenyl)fullero[3,4] pyrrolidine
TTh-DDO	4,4'-didecyloxy-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene
W	measured weight (net force)
WBT	Wilhelmy balance tensiometry
XPS	X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy
ZDOI	zero depth of immersion
ZnO	zinc oxide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
PUBLICATIONS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATIONS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xxi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xxx

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Wettability, contact angles and surface energy	2
<i>1.1.1 Wettability.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>1.1.2 Contact angles</i>	<i>3</i>
1.1.2.1 Wetting with water.....	4
1.1.2.2 Sessile drop goniometry.....	5
1.1.2.3 Hysteresis of the contact angle.....	6
1.1.2.4 Measurement of dynamic contact angle data.....	10
1.4.2.2.1 Contact Angle Goniometry	10
1.4.2.2.2 Tensiometry	12
<i>1.1.3 Molecular interactions.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>1.1.4 Surface energy</i>	<i>17</i>
1.1.4.1 Summary of major developments in surface energy theory	19
1.1.4.2 Lifshitz-van der Waals-acid-base (LW-AB) theory.....	20
1.2 Conducting polymers	23

1.2.1	<i>Structure and conductivity</i>	24
1.2.2	<i>Polymerisation</i>	27
1.2.3	<i>Electroactivity</i>	28
1.2.4	<i>Chemical interactions</i>	29
1.2.5	<i>Surface energy and wettability</i>	30
1.3	Microfluidic systems	32
1.3.1.1	What are microfluidic devices?	33
1.3.1.2	Materials	34
1.3.1.3	Applications	35
1.3.1.4	Channel- and droplet-based configurations	35
1.3.1.5	Surface tension forces on the microscale	36
1.4	Fluid control techniques in microfluidic systems	37
1.4.1	<i>Mechanical fluid control</i>	37
1.4.2	<i>Non-mechanical fluid control</i>	38
1.4.2.1	Electrokinetic	38
1.4.2.1.1	Electroosmosis	38
1.4.2.1.2	Electrophoresis	39
1.4.2.2	Surface tension-driven flow	40
1.4.2.2.1	Thermal control of surface tension	40
1.4.2.2.2	Chemical control of surface tension	41
1.4.2.2.3	Electrical control of surface tension	41
1.4.3	<i>Use of conducting polymers in microfluidic systems</i>	43
1.4.3.1	General usage	43
1.4.3.2	Use of conducting polymers for fluid control in microfluidic devices	44
1.5	Thesis Aims	46

1.6	References	48
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CHAPTER 2

GENERAL EXPERIMENTAL	62
2.1 Introduction	63
2.2 Reagents and materials	63
2.2.1 <i>Reagents</i>	63
2.2.2 <i>Electrodes</i>	63
2.3 Electrochemical polymerisation of conducting polymers	64
2.3.1 <i>Instrumentation</i>	64
2.3.2 <i>Trilayer integrated membrane configuration</i>	65
2.4 Characterisation techniques	66
2.4.1 <i>Electrochemical characterisation</i>	67
2.4.2 <i>Scanning Electron Microscopy</i>	67
2.4.3 <i>Wettability and surface energy measurements</i>	67
2.4.3.1 Contact angle goniometry of sessile drops.....	68
2.4.3.2 Dynamic contact angle analyses	69
2.5 References	69

CHAPTER 3

WETTABILITY AND SURFACE ENERGY OF POLYTERTHIOPHENES.....	70
3.1 Introduction	71
3.1.1 <i>Wettability studies on polythiophenes and their application in microdevices</i>	71
3.1.2 <i>Raman spectroscopic analysis of polythiophenes</i>	74
3.1.3 <i>Chapter Aims</i>	76
3.2 Experimental methods	78

3.2.1	<i>Reagents and materials</i>	78
3.2.2	<i>Electrochemical deposition and parameters</i>	78
3.2.3	<i>Instrumentation and characterisation</i>	79
3.2.3.1	Determination of reduction potential (E^0) for PTTh.ClO ₄	79
3.2.3.2	UV-Visible spectroscopy	80
3.2.3.3	Atomic Force Microscopy	80
3.2.3.4	Optical profilometry.....	80
3.2.3.5	Thickness determination of PTTh.ClO ₄	80
3.2.3.6	Raman spectroscopy	81
3.2.3.6.1	Depth profiling studies.....	81
3.2.3.6.2	Raman measurement through water drops.....	82
3.2.3.7	<i>In-situ</i> electrochemical contact angle of captive water drop on PTTh.ClO ₄	82
3.3	Results	83
3.3.1	<i>General characterisation of PTTh.ClO₄, PTTh-DDO.ClO₄ and PTTh- C₆₀.ClO₄</i>	83
3.3.1.1	Electrochemical deposition and characterisation.....	83
3.3.1.1.1	PTTh.ClO ₄	83
3.3.1.1.2	PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄	86
3.3.1.1.3	PTTh-C ₆₀ .ClO ₄	87
3.3.1.2	UV-Vis spectroscopy	89
3.3.1.2.1	PTTh.ClO ₄	89
3.3.1.2.2	PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄	90
3.3.1.2.3	PTTh-C ₆₀ .ClO ₄	91
3.3.1.3	Optical characterisations	92
3.3.1.3.1	PTTh.ClO ₄	92

	3.3.1.3.2	PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	98
3.3.2		<i>Wettability and surface energy of PTTh films</i>	100
	3.3.2.1	Uncoated substrates	100
	3.3.2.2	PTTh.CIO ₄	102
		3.3.2.2.1 Thick films	102
		3.3.2.2.2 Thin films.....	107
	3.3.2.3	PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	109
	3.3.2.4	Summary of valid contact angle data for surface energy determination of PTTh	111
3.3.3		<i>Interaction between water and PTTh.CIO₄ films</i>	113
	3.3.3.1	Spreading of water drops on as-deposited PTTh.CIO ₄	113
	3.3.3.2	The ‘watermark effect’ on as-deposited PTTh.CIO ₄	113
	3.3.3.3	Raman spectroscopic investigation of PTTh.CIO ₄ oxidation state	115
		3.3.3.3.1 Surface and ‘scratched’ polymer.....	115
		3.3.3.3.2 Depth profiling of as-deposited PTTh.CIO ₄	116
		3.3.3.3.3 Raman investigation of the watermark effect	122
3.3.4		<i>Raman spectroscopy of functionalised polyterthiophene PTTh-DDO.CIO₄</i>	124
3.3.5		<i>In-situ electrochemically-induced contact angle changes</i>	126
3.4		Discussion	126
3.4.1		<i>Effect of water on oxidation state of PTTh.CIO₄</i>	126
	3.4.1.1	Influence of substrate and film thickness on PTTh.CIO ₄ surface auto-reduction	127
		3.4.1.1.1 Thick films	127
		3.4.1.1.2 Thin films.....	134

3.4.1.1.3	Effect of film thickness on PTTh.CIO ₄ reduction potential and extent of surface auto-reduction	137
3.4.1.2	Explanation of watermark effect.....	138
3.4.2	<i>Effect of chemical interactions on contact angle and surface energy values</i>	141
3.4.2.1	Spontaneous change in contact angle of water on as-deposited PTTh.CIO ₄	141
3.4.2.2	Watermark effect.....	142
3.4.2.3	Analysis of valid surface energy results	143
3.4.3	<i>Effect of PTTh composition and morphology on contact angle and surface energy</i>	145
3.4.3.1	Surface energy of polyterthiophenes with valid contact angle data	145
3.4.3.2	Effect of oxidation state on water contact angles	147
3.4.3.2.1	Thick PTTh.CIO ₄ films	148
3.4.3.2.2	Thin PTTh.CIO ₄ films	150
3.4.3.2.3	PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	150
3.4.3.3	Effect of polymer functionalisation on water contact angle	151
3.4.3.4	Effect of film thickness on water contact angle.....	152
3.4.3.4.1	PTTh.CIO ₄	152
3.4.3.4.2	PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	154
3.4.3.5	Effect of substrate on water contact angle of PTTh.CIO ₄	155
3.4.3.6	<i>In-situ</i> electrochemical contact angle measurements of captive water drop on PTTh.CIO ₄	156
3.5	Conclusions	158
3.6	References	161

CHAPTER 4

REVERSIBLE FLUID CONTROL OF ORGANIC LIQUIDS USING

POLYPYRROLE	168
4.1 Introduction	169
4.1.1 <i>Solutocapillary-driven flow</i>	170
4.1.2 <i>Droplet-based microfluidic devices</i>	170
4.1.3 <i>Wettability studies of polypyrrole and sodium dodecylbenzenesulfonate</i>	171
4.1.4 <i>Chapter Aims</i>	172
4.2 Experimental methods	175
4.2.1 <i>Reagents and materials</i>	175
4.2.2 <i>Electrochemical preparation of polymers</i>	175
4.2.3 <i>Cyclic voltammetric studies</i>	176
4.2.3.1 <i>Determination of Pt-PVDF electroactive surface area</i>	176
4.2.4 <i>In-situ electrochemical contact angle measurements</i>	177
4.3 Results and discussion	178
4.3.1 <i>Preparation of PPy.DBS on Pt-PVDF and Pt sheet</i>	178
4.3.2 <i>Initial characterisations of PPy.DBS</i>	178
4.3.2.1 <i>Optical characterisation of PPy.DBS-coated substrates</i>	179
4.3.2.2 <i>Wettability characterisations of PPy.DBS-coated substrates in air</i>	180
4.3.2.2.1 <i>PPy.DBS on Pt sheet</i>	180
4.3.2.2.2 <i>PPy.DBS on Pt-PVDF</i>	182
4.3.3 <i>Electrochemical characterisations</i>	183
4.3.3.1 <i>Electrochemical characterisation of uncoated Pt-PVDF</i>	183
4.3.3.2 <i>Electrochemical characterisation of PPy.DBS-coated substrates</i> .	185
4.3.3.2.1 <i>Electrochemistry of PPy.DBS on Pt-disk</i>	185

4.3.3.2.2	Electrochemistry of PPy.DBS on Pt-PVDF	186
4.3.4	<i>Investigation of fluid movement using PPy.DBS</i>	188
4.3.4.1	Fluid movement using integrated trilayer PPy.DBS-coated Pt-PVDF configuration	189
4.3.4.1.1	Mechanism of DCM shape change	191
4.3.4.1.2	Lateral translation of DCM drops	198
4.3.4.2	Fluid movement using PPy.DBS-coated Pt sheet	200
4.3.4.2.1	Contact angle and dimension change of DCM drops	201
4.3.4.2.2	Speed of pulsing DCM drops	203
4.3.4.2.3	Effect of tilt on DCM droplet motion	204
4.3.4.2.4	Lateral translation of DCM drops on PPy.DBS-coated sheet	206
4.4	Conclusions	209
4.5	References	211

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLYPYRROLE INTO MICRODEVICES FOR

FLUID CONTROL	215
5.1 Introduction	216
5.1.1 <i>Fluid movement in microdevices</i>	216
5.1.2 <i>Dynamic contact angle analysis of polypyrrole</i>	216
5.1.3 <i>Chapter Aims</i>	217
5.2 Experimental methods	219
5.2.1 <i>Reagents and materials</i>	219
5.2.2 <i>Electrochemical deposition</i>	220

5.2.3	<i>Preparation of solid polymer ionic liquid electrolyte for fluid movement using trilayer devices</i>	221
5.2.4	<i>Electrochemical characterisations</i>	222
5.2.5	<i>Dynamic contact angle measurements</i>	223
5.2.6	<i>Water head of pressure measurement</i>	223
5.2.7	<i>Cell configurations for electrochemically-induced fluid movement using polypyrrole-coated microchannels</i>	224
5.2.8	<i>Flow control using PPy.DBS-coated Pt-PVDF membrane</i>	225
5.3	Results and Discussion	226
5.3.1	<i>Fluid movement using polypyrrole-coated microchannels</i>	226
5.3.1.1	Optical and electrochemical characterisations.....	226
5.3.1.1.1	Pt-coated microchannels	226
5.3.1.1.2	PPy-coated Pt-microchannels	228
5.3.1.2	Characterisation of polypyrrole by dynamic contact angle analyses	232
5.3.1.2.1	PPy-coated Pt-PMMA.....	232
5.3.1.2.2	PPy-coated Pt wire	234
5.3.1.3	Electrochemically-induced fluid movement of electrolyte in PPy.DBS-coated microchannels	242
5.3.1.3.1	Initial studies	243
5.3.1.3.2	Quantitative study of electrolyte movement in PPy.DBS-coated microchannels	245
5.3.1.4	Drawbacks of the open channel configuration for fluid movement	248
5.3.2	<i>Integrated electrochemical device for fluid movement in air</i>	249

5.3.3	<i>Use of PPy.DBS-coated Pt-PVDF membrane and DCM drop as flow control valve</i>	253
5.4	Conclusions	256
5.5	References	259

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	262
----------------------------------	------------

APPENDICES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

- Figure 1.** Diagram showing from left to right: highly wetting, partially wetting and non-wetting surfaces. 2
- Figure 2.** Schematic of the contact angle formed between a liquid and a solid in surrounding vapour phase. 3
- Figure 3.** Two models of superhydrophobicity. 8
- Figure 4.** Advancing and receding contact angle measurement using captive drop goniometry. 11
- Figure 5.** An idealised hysteresis loop for a wetting cycle of a non-ideal sample using Wilhelmy balance tensiometry, showing a plot of weight vs. immersion depth. 13
- Figure 6.** Schematic of the difference in band gap for insulators, semi-conductors and conductors. 25
- Figure 7.** Electronic structure of partially doped polythiophene. 26
- Figure 8.** Electronic structure of partially doped polypyrrole. 27
- Figure 9.** Mechanism for the maintenance of charge neutrality upon switching of polypyrrole between oxidised and reduced states. 29

CHAPTER 2

- Figure 1.** Schematic of three-electrode electrochemical cell used for all polymerisations and electrochemical characterisation of polymers. 65
- Figure 2.** Integrated trilayer electrochemical cell configuration. 66

CHAPTER 3

- Figure 1.** 2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (TTh). 76

Figure 2. 4,4'-didecyloxy-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (TTh-DDO).....	76
Figure 3. N-methyl-2-(2-[2':5',2''-terthiophen-3'-yl]ethenyl)fullero[3,4]pyrrolidine (TTh-C ₆₀).....	77
Figure 4. Set-up for <i>in-situ</i> electrochemical contact angle measurement of captive drop.	83
Figure 5. Cyclic voltammogram of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on Pt disk in 0.1 M TBA.ClO ₄ in DCM.	85
Figure 6. Cyclic voltammograms to determine E ⁰ of a) thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) and b) thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄	86
Figure 7. Cyclic voltammogram of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄ on Pt disk in 0.1 M TBA.ClO ₄ in 1:1 ACN/DCM.	87
Figure 8. Cyclic voltammogram of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh-C ₆₀ .ClO ₄ on Pt disk in 0.1 M TBA.ClO ₄ in DCM.	88
Figure 9. UV-Vis spectra of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on ITO-coated glass.	89
Figure 10. UV-Vis spectra of PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄ on Pt sheet.	90
Figure 11. UV-Vis spectra of PTTh.ClO ₄ on ITO-coated glass.	91
Figure 12. SEM images of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) and thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ in the as-deposited or electrochemically reduced states.....	93
Figure 13. AFM images of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ films.....	94
Figure 14. Optical profilometry images of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) and thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ films in the as-deposited or electrochemically reduced states and uncoated substrate.....	96
Figure 15. Optical microscope image of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ film on ITO-coated glass.	97

Figure 16. Optical profilometry images of PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄ deposited on Pt sheet (50 x magnification).....	99
Figure 17. SEM images of PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄ deposited on Pt sheet (5000 x magnification).....	99
Figure 18. Water drop on surface of PTTh.CIO ₄ on Pt sheet.....	104
Figure 19. Water drop on surface of PTTh.CIO ₄ on Pt-PVDF.	104
Figure 20. Water drop on surface of PTTh.CIO ₄ on GC.....	104
Figure 21. Water drop on surface of PTTh.CIO ₄ on ITO.....	104
Figure 22. Water drop on the surface of reduced thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh-DDO.CIO ₄	110
Figure 23. Sequential still images captured from a video of a water drop spreading upon contact with as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.CIO ₄ on Pt sheet.	113
Figure 24. Optical microscope image of a) water drop placed in b) water mark of previous droplet on c) as-deposited thick PTTh.CIO ₄ film.....	114
Figure 25. Optical image of an area of thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) as-deposited PTTh.CIO ₄ film which had been scratched to reveal underlying layers.....	115
Figure 26. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.CIO ₄ on Pt sheet.	118
Figure 27. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.CIO ₄ on Pt-PVDF.	118
Figure 28. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.CIO ₄ on glassy carbon.	119
Figure 29. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.CIO ₄ on ITO-coated glass.....	119

Figure 30. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on Pt sheet.....	120
Figure 31. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on Pt-PVDF.	121
Figure 32. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on glassy carbon.	121
Figure 33. Confocal Raman depth profiling through thickness of as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ on ITO-coated glass.....	122
Figure 34. Raman spectra at different positions on as-deposited thick (50 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ film.	123
Figure 35. Raman spectra at different positions on as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄ film.	123
Figure 36. Raman spectra of as-deposited thick PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄ on platinum sheet.	125
Figure 37. Raman spectra of reduced thick PTTh-DDO.ClO ₄ (reduction potential of -0.5 V vs. Ag/Ag ⁺) on platinum sheet.	125
Figure 38. Electrochemical contact angle measurement of captive water bubble resting on the underside of PTTh.ClO ₄ -coated Pt sheet.	126
Figure 39. Raman intensity of various bands with respect to distance z-stage moved shifting the focal point into as-deposited thick PTTh.ClO ₄	129
Figure 40. Raman intensity ratios of various bands with respect to distance z-stage moved shifting the laser focal point into as-deposited thick PTTh.ClO ₄	133
Figure 41. Raman intensity of various bands with respect to distance z-stage moved shifting the laser focal point into as-deposited thin (10 mC/cm ² charge density) PTTh.ClO ₄	135

Figure 42. Raman intensity ratios of various bands with respect to distance z-stage moved shifting the laser focal point into as-deposited thin PTh.ClO ₄	136
Figure 43. Schematic Evans diagram showing PTh.ClO ₄ oxidation and reduction reactions with O ₂ /H ₂ O redox processes.	137
Figure 44. Schematic for the interaction of water with as-deposited thick PTh.ClO ₄	140
Figure 45. Schematic for the interaction of water with as-deposited thin PTh.ClO ₄ .	140
Figure 46. Schematic of the watermark effect on as-deposited thick PTh.ClO ₄	143

CHAPTER 4

Figure 1. Structure of polypyrrole doped with dodecylbenzenesulfonate (PPy.DBS).	173
Figure 2. Set-up for <i>in-situ</i> electrochemical contact angle measurement.	177
Figure 3. SEM images of PPy.DBS, deposited using a charge density of 90 mC/cm ² in a three-electrode cell vs. Ag/AgCl.	179
Figure 4. Cyclic voltammogram of Pt-PVDF (film area = 2 cm ²) and Pt wire (area approx. 16 mm ²).....	184
Figure 5. Cyclic voltammogram of PPy.DBS on Pt disk working electrode with Pt mesh counter electrode vs. Ag/AgCl in 0.1 M NaNO ₃	186
Figure 6. Cyclic voltammograms of PPy.DBS on Pt-PVDF working electrode in 0.1 M NaNO ₃	187
Figure 7. Image taken from video footage showing the shape change of DCM drops resting on the trilayer integrated PPy.DBS-coated electrode.....	190
Figure 8. Schematic of interaction of DBS dopant with DCM drop at polymer-electrolyte interface, based on theoretical surface energy change of PPy.DBS.	192

Figure 9. Schematic showing the change in DCM drop shape upon reversible incorporation and expulsion of minute amounts of DBS dopant into and from PPy.DBS upon oxidation and reduction, respectively.	193
Figure 10. Schematic of integrated trilayer PPy.DBS-coated PVDF membrane configuration for lateral fluid movement attempts of DCM.	198
Figure 11. Schematic of integrated trilayer PPy.DBS-coated PVDF membrane configuration for lateral fluid movement attempts of DCM.	199
Figure 12. Video images of DCM drops on two different PPy.DBS-coated Pt-sheets.	201
Figure 13. Graph showing the change in a) large and b) small DCM drop dimensions and contact angles upon oxidation and reduction of PPy.DBS-coated Pt sheet in external 0.1 M NaNO ₃ electrolyte using a Pt mesh counter electrode and Ag/AgCl reference electrode.	202
Figure 14. Video images showing the change in shape of DCM drops on PPy.DBS-coated Pt sheet in 0.1 M NaNO ₃ during rapid pulsing (0.25 sec) upon application of a) oxidation (+0.6 V) and b) reduction (-0.8 V) pulses (<i>vs</i> Ag/AgCl). Scale bar = 2 mm.	204
Figure 15. Sequential still images captured from a video of DCM drops rolling down a slight incline on PPy.DBS-coated Pt sheet during switching of the polymer from oxidised to reduced.	205
Figure 16. Change in shape of a DCM drop resting on PPy.DBS-Pt glass upon redox switching in external 0.1 M NaNO ₃ electrolyte, using a Pt mesh counter electrode and a Ag/AgCl reference electrode.	208

CHAPTER 5

- Figure 1.** Structure of polypyrrole doped with dodecylbenzenesulfonate (PPy.DBS). 218
- Figure 2.** Structure of polypyrrole doped with *p*-toluenesulfonate (PPy.pTS). 218
- Figure 3.** Integrated trilayer electrochemical cell configuration: PPy.DBS deposited on both sides of Pt-PVDF membrane to form a working electrode (1 mA/cm^2 , 90s) and a thicker counter electrode (1 mA/cm^2 , 180s).. 222
- Figure 4.** Schematic of three-electrode cell for studying fluid control in the horizontal configuration: a) top view and b) side view..... 224
- Figure 5.** Schematic of configuration to measure flow control of electrolyte through a PPy.DBS-coated PVDF membrane through a 2 mm diameter hole using a dichloromethane droplet ($\sim 3 \text{ }\mu\text{L}$) as a valve. 225
- Figure 6.** Main figure: Cyclic voltammogram of a $500 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ diameter platinum wire (heavy line) and a $700 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ width platinised channel (light line) in $5 \text{ mM K}_3\text{Fe(CN)}_6$ and $1.0 \text{ M KCl vs. Ag/AgCl}$ using a scan rate of 50 mV/s . Inset: Cyclic voltammograms of $500 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ (heavy line) and $300 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ (light line) width channels in $5 \text{ mM K}_3\text{Fe(CN)}_6$ and $1.0 \text{ M KCl vs. Ag/AgCl}$ using a scan rate of 50 mV/s 227
- Figure 7.** a) Optical image of platinised channel (left) and PPy.DBS-coated channel (right) of width $700 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ depth ca. $100 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$. Graduated markings in left-hand side image are 0.5 mm . b) Zoomed image of PPy.DBS-coated channel. 229
- Figure 8.** Main image: SEM images of PPy.DBS-coated microchannel. Main image: $12000 \times$ zoom; scale bar represents $25 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$. Inset: $450 \times$ zoom; scale bar represents $100 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 229
- Figure 9.** Cyclic voltammogram of $700 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ channel coated with PPy.DBS in 0.1 M KCl ; potential limits: -1.0 to $+0.65 \text{ V}$; scan rate = 100 mV s^{-1} vs. Ag/AgCl ; 10 cycles. 230

Figure 10. Cyclic voltammogram of 700 μm channel coated with PPy.pTS in 0.1 M KCl; potential limits: -1.0 to +0.65 V; scan rate = 100 mV s^{-1} vs. Ag/AgCl; 5 cycles shown.	231
Figure 11. Idealised schematic of DBS configuration at polymer-water interface under oxidising and reducing conditions.	237
Figure 12. Force-distance curve for as-deposited (oxidised) PPy.DBS using water as a probe liquid.	238
Figure 13. Force-distance curve for chemically reduced PPy.DBS (pre-reduced in concentrated hydrazine), using 1.0 M hydrazine as a probe liquid.....	238
Figure 14. Sequential video images showing movement of 0.1 M KCl electrolyte along PPy.DBS-coated microchannel (700 μm width and 350 μm depth) under application of reducing potential (-1.0 V vs. Ag/AgCl for 180 s).....	243
Figure 15. Schematic depicting the electrocapillary effect.....	244
Figure 16. Distance of fluid movement (mm) with respect to KCl concentration on a) PPy.DBS-coated 700 μm wide, 100 μm deep platinised PMMA channels and b) control (non-polymer-coated) 700 μm wide, 100 μm deep platinised PMMA channels upon application of -0.8 V vs. Ag/AgCl.	246
Figure 17. Plot of distance of fluid (0.1 M KCl) moved and charged passed over a 120 s period vs. applied potential in PPy.DBS coated channel.	247
Figure 18. Cyclic voltammogram of integrated trilayer PPy.DBS-coated Pt-PVDF configuration, with PPy.DBS working electrode and counter electrodes (2-electrode cell) and ionic liquid electrolyte (EMI.TFSI).	250
Figure 19. Cyclic voltammogram of Pt-PVDF membrane with polymer-ionic liquid electrolyte (PILE) in a two-electrode cell configuration, prior to the deposition of PPy.DBS on the electrodes.	253

Figure 20. Schematic showing the change in flow of electrolyte through the porous PPy.DBS-Pt-PVDF membrane switching device detailed in Chapter 4.....254

Figure 21. The change of electrolyte flow through PPy.DBS-coated Pt-PVDF membrane working electrode upon application of oxidising (+0.60 V *vs.* Ag/AgCl) and reducing (-0.80 V *vs.* Ag/AgCl) potentials using a dichloromethane droplet valve (weight of water evaporation: 0.05 mg/s).....255

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Table 1. Molecular interactions occurring on ionic, polar and non-polar functional groups.....	15
Table 2. Surface energy components (mJ/m^2) at 20 °C of commonly used probe liquids in the Lifshitz-van der Waals-acid-base approach ([73] and references cited therein.) .	22

CHAPTER 3

Table 1. Contact angle ($^\circ$) and surface energy components (mJ/m^2) for various polythiophenes published in the literature.	72
Table 2. Raman peak assignments for polythiophene [18].	75
Table 3. Deposition conditions of polyterthiophenes from various monomers.	79
Table 4. Roughness (r) measurements of PTTh. ClO_4 films deposited on various substrates at 50 x magnification.....	96
Table 5. Roughness measurements of PTTh-DDO. ClO_4 films deposited on platinum sheet at 50 x magnification	100
Table 6. Effect of washing bare substrates on resulting water contact angle ($^\circ$).	101
Table 7. Contact angle ($^\circ$) and surface energy data (mJ/m^2) for test liquids on uncoated working electrode substrates.....	101
Table 8. Contact angles of water droplets on thick PTTh. ClO_4 films deposited on various substrates. All contact angles are reported in degrees ($^\circ$).	103
Table 9. Contact angle ($^\circ$) and surface energy data (mJ/m^2) for test liquids on thick as-deposited and electrochemically-reduced PTTh. ClO_4 films on various substrates.	106
Table 10. Contact angles of water droplets on thin PTTh. ClO_4 films deposited on various substrates. All contact angles are reported in degrees ($^\circ$).	107

Table 11. Contact angle ($^{\circ}$) and surface energy data (mJ/m^2) for test liquids on thin as-deposited and electrochemically-reduced PTTh. ClO_4 films on various substrates.	108
Table 12. Contact angles of water droplets on thick and thin PTTh-DDO. ClO_4 films (50 and 10 mC/cm^2 charge density, respectively) deposited on Pt sheet in the as-deposited and reduced states. All contact angles are reported in degrees ($^{\circ}$).	110
Table 13. Contact angle ($^{\circ}$) and surface energy data (mJ/m^2) for test liquids on thick and thin (50 and 10 mC/cm^2 charge density, respectively) as-deposited and electrochemically reduced PTTh-DDO. ClO_4 on Pt sheet.	111
Table 14. Summary of contact angle ($^{\circ}$) and surface energy data (mJ/m^2) for test liquids on PTTh. ClO_4 and PTTh-DDO. ClO_4 with measurable contact angles for all test liquids.....	112
Table 15. Work function of substrates (eV) and the depth into PTTh. ClO_4 where film becomes doped (μm).....	131
Table 16. Electrode potentials of thick and thin PTTh. ClO_4 and water.....	137
Table 17. Comparison of water contact angles for thick and thin PTTh. ClO_4 ($^{\circ}$), for as-deposited and reduced films. Polymer roughness (r) is shown in brackets.....	152
Table 18. Water contact angles for thick and thin PTTh-DDO. ClO_4 ($^{\circ}$) deposited on Pt sheet for as-deposited and reduced films. Polymer roughness (r) is shown in brackets.	154

CHAPTER 4

Table 1. Water contact angles ($^{\circ}$) of PPy.DBS deposited on Pt sheet and Pt-PVDF in the as-deposited (oxidised) and reduced states, along with water contact angles of the uncoated substrates.	180
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Table 2. Electroactive surface area of Pt-PVDF (1 cm ² geometric area) and Pt disk (0.0176 cm ² geometric area) calculated from cyclic voltammograms in 5 mM K ₃ [Fe(CN) ₆]/0.1 M NaNO ₃	185
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CHAPTER 5

Table 1. Oxidation (E _{ox}) and reduction (E _{red}) potentials for Pt wire and Pt-coated microchannels of varying widths cycled in 5 mM K ₃ Fe(CN) ₆ in 0.5 M KCl at 50 mV/s.	228
Table 2. Dynamic water contact angle (°) of PPy.DBS and PPy.pTS films on platinised PMMA in as-deposited (oxidised) states.	233
Table 3. Dynamic contact angle (°) of PPy.DBS and PPy.pTS films on platinum wire in as-deposited (oxidised) and reduced states.	235
Table 4. Comparison of dynamic water contact angles (°) of as-deposited (oxidised) PPy.DBS and PPy.pTS as-deposited (oxidised) state from the present study with PPy.DS and PPy.pTS from Teasdale and Azioune <i>et al.</i>	240