Topology optimization of a pseudo 3D thermofluid heat sink model

This paper investigates the application of density-based topology optimization to the design of air-cooled forced convection heat sinks. To reduce the computational burden that is associated with a full 3D optimization, a pseudo 3D optimization model comprising a 2D modeled conducting metal base layer and a thermally coupled 2D modeled thermofluid design layer is used. Symmetry conditions perpendicular to the flow direction are applied to generate periodic heat sink designs. The optimization objective is to minimize the heat sink heat transfer resistance for a fixed pressure drop over the heat sink and a fixed heat production rate in the base plate. Optimized designs are presented and the resulting fin geometry is discussed from a thermal engineering point of view and compared to fin shapes resulting from a pressure drop minimization objective. Parametric studies are conducted to analyze the influence of the pressure drop on the heat sink heat transfer resistance. To quantify the influence of the assumptions made in the pseudo 3D optimization model, validation simulations with a body-fitted mesh in 2D and 3D are conducted. A good agreement between optimization model and validation simulations is found, confirming the physical validity of the utilized optimization model. Two topology optimized designs are exemplarily benchmarked against a size optimized parallel fin heat sink and an up to 13.6% lower thermal resistance is found to be realized by the topology optimization.