

PROCESSORS

AMD commits to processor supply

AMD has announced a program which provides an extended product life cycle to support system designers in the high-end, high-performance embedded market with the AMD Opteron processor.

The AMD64 platform with Direct Connect Architecture will now be available for five years for a select set of the AMD Opteron processor family. This guarantee will be of interest to customers in telecommunications servers, storage systems, digital imaging devices and custom embedded markets.

Iain Morris, senior vice president, personal connectivity solutions group at AMD, said, "AMD is responding to our customers' needs with a high-performance embedded processor roadmap for almost every conceivable embedded design, from the AMD Alchemy and AMD Geode processors to the

industry-leading AMD Opteron processor."

Leading chipset, core logic and developer tools companies are supporting a similar longevity option and giving embedded designers a large portfolio of choice for developing their AMD64 technology-based products.

AMD64 technology has the support of more than 300 independent software vendors and open source software organizations worldwide, representing 1,050 software packages.

AMD has also released two Geode processor-based development boards designed to help simplify the design and development of x86 embedded and industrial computing devices. The DBSC1100 and DBSC1200 development boards provide a computer-on-module design suitable for low-power, high-performance comput-

ing products including set-top boxes, thin client form factors and information appliances.

The development boards provide developers with a comprehensive solution including schematics, documentation and a complete software driver package. The CPU module and base board can be incorporated into a wide range of end-user designs without modifications.

The small form factor, low power and simplified design packages of the development boards help developers create increasingly smaller devices demanded by the embedded and industrial markets. Application developers can reduce time-to-market for smaller, higher performing devices because the boards require minimal device enclosure space, provide broad support for industry standards and already include extensive design and engineering.

COOPERATION

Actel/ARM link brings ARM7 to FPGA

An ARM processor has been licensed to a programmable logic vendor for implementation as a 'soft' IP core. Actel and ARM has disclosed that they have collaborated to provide a 32-bit ARM7 Thumb family microprocessor to Actel's FPGA customer base.

With the establishment of this partnership, Actel will deliver to developers a soft ARM7 family implementation for use in several of its FPGA families. Targeting the fastest growing market for design-ins, this move will create the first soft core FPGA version of the ARM7 family microprocessor that can be leveraged across applications ranging from high-volume consumer applications to high-performance, high-reliability products.

As a consequence, it is claimed that programmable logic users will be able to access ASIC-like design flexibility, with broad third-party support and

trusted IP, as well as the added programmability and security benefits of Actel FPGAs.

Mike Inglis, EVP Marketing, ARM, said, "For the first time, ARM can provide FPGA designers the flexibility of a soft IP core thanks to the built-in security of Actel's flash- and antifuse-based FPGAs. With this unique collaboration, the ARM7 family can now be designed into FPGA-based consumer products; FPGA development platforms for ASICs and prototyping; and especially for applications where low volumes have previously precluded the use of ARM processors."

John East, president and CEO of Actel, added, "For nearly two decades, we have been saying that in the long run customers always get what they want, and this agreement is a perfect example. ARM is the leading provider of 32-bit embedded processor technology, and FPGA users have, for a long

time, asked for access to this industry-standard architecture in a soft-IP format. Through this historic partnership with ARM, we will extend the reach of the ARM architecture to include markets that could not previously afford individual access. We are bringing an FPGA-optimized ARM7 family core to the masses."

As part of the agreement, Actel will develop a family of ARM technology-enabled FPGA products. The initial devices will be introduced later in 2005. The soft core ARM7 family processor will be delivered to customers using the security features available in Actel FPGA devices. Developers will be able to take advantage of the end-to-end integrated solution provided by the Actel Libero and ARM RealView tools, enabling them to develop products, which maximize functionality and achieve optimal design performance.

In brief

Nokia deal for ENEA

Enea has signed a multi year software licensing agreement with Nokia based on a new royalty-based licensing model and covers the OSE family of products together with related services to be used in Nokia's terminal software platforms.

Learning PROFIBUS

The PROFIBUS Group has released programme details for the International PROFIBUS Conference to be held at Coombe Abbey, Coventry, England June 21 and 22, 2005. The educational programme will cover PROFIBUS and PROFINET technology including PROFIsafe, PROFIdrive and PROFIBUS PA supported by case studies, an exhibition and technology demonstrations.

IP partner

Quest Innovations, the Netherlands based developer of turn-key reusable IP, has become a preferred IP partner in the Aldec IP Core Partner Program. Aldec is a supplier of mixed-language simulation and advanced design tools for ASIC and FPGA devices.

Indian purchase

Toshiba has acquired Socrates Software India, an embedded software and reusable software component developer for digital consumer and personal communication applications. Toshiba already outsources software development to two other Indian firms, Sasken Communication and Wipro Technologies.

ECC chosen

The National Security Agency has specified elliptic-curve cryptography (ECC) for a range of key agreement and digital signature tasks. The decision boosts the fortunes of ECC originator Certicom and follows NSA's licensing of Certicom algorithms for a program in which NSA will actively work with suppliers of secure modules.