

In brief

GPS software

RUTRONIK Elektronische Bauelemente has signed a distribution deal with Fastrax, a Finnish provider of open and portable environments for the OEM GPS software development kit and programmable OEM GPS receivers, which covers Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Eastern Europe with Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Hungary.

Voice improvement

VMTS has integrated SPIRIT's embedded voice products into its baseband processors to enhance next-generation mobile handsets with superior voice quality. The mass production of VMTS's new E-Vision solution with SPIRIT's high quality embedded voice for the wireless market will begin this month.

Advanced MC deal

Motorola has set up a strategic alliance with Interphase making it Motorola's preferred provider for I/O Advanced Mezzanine Cards (AdvancedMCs). The agreement provides for incorporating a range of Interphase products into the roadmaps of the Embedded Communications Computing business of Motorola, alignment of future roadmaps and priorities, and joint planning and development of AdvancedMC solutions as well as joint sales and marketing.

Book in development

Kontron and Franzis Buchund Software-Verlag have concluded a cooperation agreement to develop technical literature for professional developers in the field of embedded computer technology. The first joint book project will be 'Linux goes mobile' and be published in German and English, it will deal with the Linux development of mobile devices and be available from June 2006.

COOPERATION

SMA and Congatec sign agreement

SMA Technologie are to provide custom baseboard solutions for Congatec XTX modules. The companies say the advantages for the customer resulting from this close cooperation will be that they will be able to rely on solutions which integrate the latest technology and expect faster product development.

SMA Technologie has been developing and manufacturing embedded computers for customers of a variety of industries for 25 years. It supplies analog and digital interfaces with electric separation, power interfaces and power converters as well as interfaces for integrating fieldbuses such as CAN, Interbus, and Profibus. It also has expertise in the field of 'rugged' computer technology.

SMA now also provides custom baseboard solutions for the XTX modules from Congatec. The two companies have

agreed on a close cooperation and a comprehensive exchange of experience and development know-how.

Congatec was founded by pioneers in the field of the ETX (Embedded Technology eXtended) standard and established itself on the market within one year of its founding. XTX (eXpress Technology for ETX), is Congatec's expansion of ETX. XTX offers the latest I/O technologies which makes it compatible with all of today's form factors. SMA will provide custom baseboard solutions with special features and additional options.

The integration of the XTX boards as computer-on-modules allows the simple and quick modification of individual embedded solutions to the latest processor technology. Incorporating the EPI (Embedded Panel Interface) standard,



Peter Drews, Management Board Member of SMA, and Heinz Iglhaut, Chairman of the supervisory board of Congatec, celebrate the agreement.

the same also applies to display technology. Peter Drews, Management Board Member of SMA, said, "This short time-to-market combined with our experience in the field of custom interface solutions is what makes the cooperation so attractive for our customers".

PROTECTION

Microsoft extends embedded legal support

Microsoft is broadening its financial and legal IP protection to device makers and distributors that choose Windows Embedded and Windows Mobile. The strengthened IP protection will be available in every country where Microsoft sells its products, and will cover costs for worldwide patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret and legal defense.

The company says several high-profile IP disputes have raised the importance embedded device-makers and distributors attach to careful IP risk management, and believes that IP indemnification is increasingly seen as a key reason to build devices using commercial software offerings such as Windows Embedded and Windows Mobile.

Windows Embedded had over \$100million in annual revenues, and 64 percent year-over-year product revenue growth and Microsoft believes that it is

offering device makers stronger and broader IP protection than open source providers.

Given the average cost of a relatively modest infringement action through trial is reported to be at least \$500,000 per party, and for suits where more than \$25 million is at risk the cost escalates to \$4 million per party, Microsoft says embedded and mobility device makers and distributors are increasingly counting on vendors like to give them a level of assurance they will not be exposed to unnecessary risk.

Microsoft says it is making it a priority to mitigate any issues faced by its partners so they can stay focused on innovation.

The strengthened IP protection will be available worldwide to Microsoft's mobile and embedded partners and will include the defense of OEMs and distributors against IP claims in every country in which Microsoft distributes or markets its

Windows Mobile and Windows Embedded products, protection of patent, copyright, trademark and trade secret claims based on Windows Mobile and Windows Embedded software, and removal of the monetary cap related to defense costs.

In 2003, Microsoft removed monetary caps for volume licensees after learning that this was a concern. In November 2004, it extended its IP protection for customers by taking coverage previously available only to volume licensees and making it available to non-volume-license end users. In June 2005, Microsoft strengthened indemnification for its \$18 billion partner channel, including removal of the monetary cap for legal defense fees. The strengthened indemnification benefited PC manufacturers, including OEMs, system builder partners, OEM distributors and independent software vendor (ISV) royalty partners.