



# Keeping IP safe

Leading intellectual property vendors are giving quiet – but not yet unequivocal – support to an initiative intended to enable the secure use of their technology in fpgas.

Although players such as Xilinx, Altera and Actel have successfully delivered products with tailored IP for such applications as dsp, concerns over IP security have been one obstacle facing fpga companies in their attempts to take further market share from asics.

The latest effort, being led by the VSI Alliance (VSIA), makes use of the Open IP Encryption technology. It has

VSIA leads move to protect IP in fpgas.

**Paul Dempsey**  
reports from Monterey.

been donated to the industry group by eda vendor and fpga tools specialist Synplicity and was the winner of a Design Vision Award last year.

Although none of the leading IP

companies is currently a VSIA member, New Electronics understands that at least two of the major players in the microprocessor cores space – ARM and MIPS Technologies – have been in touch with the alliance's IP Encryption Workgroup and are broadly supportive of its goal.

The VSIA's workgroup also counts the three largest eda vendors – Cadence Design Systems, Mentor Graphics and Synopsys – amongst its active membership.

A further update on the initiative's progress is expected at June's Design Automation Conference in San Diego.

## Snap decision?



UK wireless specialist Artimi has launched a reference design for a low to mid cost digital camera incorporating Wireless USB technology, cementing a potentially critical relationship with one of the sector's main players.

The kit, unveiled at the Globalpress Electronics Summit by ceo Colin Macnab, has been developed in conjunction with Zoran, a leading supplier of digital cameras that are 'badged' for major consumer electronics brands.

The kit's launch also coincides with the recent appointment of Zoran founder and Silicon Valley veteran Jon Castor as chairman of Artimi.

The kit is based on Artimi's WiMedia technology for the ultra wideband space. It could allow 1Gbyte of photos to be downloaded wirelessly to a computer or printer in just 30s.

## Cypress outsources process work

Cypress Semiconductor is the latest chip company to outsource a large chunk of its process development work to a foundry.

Dinesh Ramanathan, executive vice president for data communications, revealed the company will be using UMC for its forthcoming 65nm sram products and tape out is due later this year.

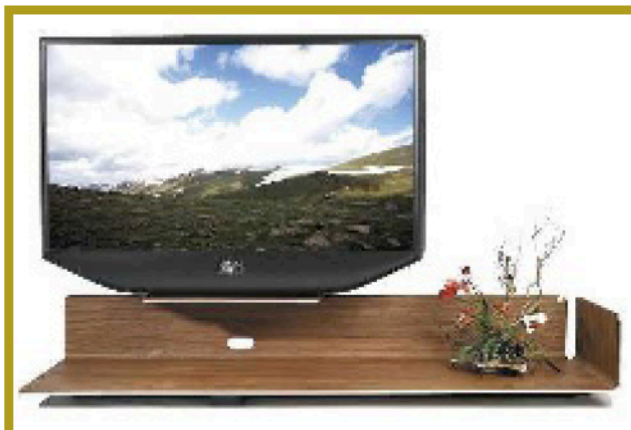
The deal also covers the next two generations of embedded flash based products, including Cypress's PSoC mixed signal array and USB devices.

Ramanathan said the decision was part of a 'No More Moore' strategy. Cypress has determined that the bulk of its product range no longer requires aggressive linewidth reductions and has therefore decided to cut back on process R&D.

The plan should reduce R&D spend by 17% from its current \$850million by the end of the year, also allowing for an increase in software development to support programmable and embedded product lines.

Ramanathan said Cypress has no immediate plans to close its two existing fabs. It recently sold its Fab 1 to a venture capital backed consortium. Fab 2 is at capacity and Fab 4 was 'on budget' at 75 to 80% capacity.

"However," he added: "I don't see us closing them [the fabs], but it's true they could become uncompetitive and then we'll have to take a decision.



## TI to make new DLP hdtv push

Texas Instruments is set to put new impetus behind its Digital Light Processor (DLP) technology for hdtvs with the launch of a range of slimmed down displays, most likely at next year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES).

Chief technology officer Hans Stork told the Globalpress Electronics Summit that the company had privately shown a 5.5in thick display to manufacturers at CES 2007 in January, although only a 10in thick display from Samsung was on public view.

Stork said the display was in the 40 to 45in range – seen as a 'sweet spot' for hdtvs outside the US – and weighed less than a comparable lcd tv. He anticipated that further work on combining 'advanced lighting systems' with DLP could deliver further size and weight reductions over the course of the year.

DLP's initial lead in hdtv has been eroded as a result of cost reductions in plasma and lcd manufacturing. The size of existing DLP displays has also made them unsuitable for wall mounting. At 4in and thinner, DLP will be able to compete with rival technologies across the entire hdtv sector.

## Networked home still 'a decade away'

A leading comms chip provider has dismissed claims that the era of the truly networked home has begun. Dr Henry Samueli, chairman and CTO of Broadcom, told the Globalpress Electronics Summit: "We're at least a decade away from that happening, maybe 20 years."

Numerous CES 2007 exhibitors pushed the vision of 'anything, anywhere, anytime' networking and interactive appliances. However, Samueli argued that most houses lack the infrastructure to support the concept.

"When you build a house today, the last thing you think about is how to network it," he said. He believes it will take at least five years before builders begin to consider connectivity as an important aspect of design.

Samueli also illustrated the problems in creating a networked home today using a recent project in Denver that involved 561 devices using 31 different networking standards and 85 miles of cable. It also required a full time manager.