Altium releases TASKING VX-toolset for Altera’s Nios II embedded processors

Proven Viper compiler technology gives developers 40% speed boost with 20% decrease in memory footprint

SYDNEY, Australia – June 29, 2006 – Altium Limited (ASX: ALU) today announced the release of a new TASKING VX-toolset for Altera® Corporation’s Nios® II family of embedded processors. Altium’s TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II embedded processor operates seamlessly within the Nios II Integrated Development Environment (IDE) and acts as a ‘drop in’ replacement to Altera’s standard GNU C compiler (GCC) to deliver significantly enhanced code optimization options for developers and produce faster and smaller applications.

With this release, developers will be able to add the TASKING VX-toolset to their Nios II IDE and gain access to a technically advanced compiler that delivers superior quality code generation capabilities and comprehensive support for all features of the Nios II family of embedded processors. Integration of the TASKING VX-toolset into the Nios II IDE, which is based on the open source Eclipse platform, is completely seamless. Developers gain significant productivity and quality benefits without having to spend time interfacing to external tools.

Altium’s sophisticated, next-generation Viper C compiler technology makes the TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II embedded processor unique. The compiler excels in producing highly-optimized code with the smallest footprint and fastest execution possible. This proven technology, as featured in Altium’s industry-leading TASKING embedded software development toolsets, also drives the embedded capabilities of the company’s Altium Designer product, the industry’s leading unified electronic product development system that brings together hardware, programmable hardware and software design within a single application.

“The Nios II embedded processor is the leading FPGA-based soft CPU core in the market today, with usage spanning a broad range of applications,” commented Chris Balough, director of software & Nios marketing for Altera. “With the release of this new VX-toolset from Altium, our customers now have access to a compiler technology that promises to boost system performance through higher levels of code optimization.”
Initial benchmarking of the TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II family of embedded processors indicates that it provides significant performance advantages of up to 40% increase in code execution speed and 20% decrease in memory footprint over the GCC compiler, enabling customers to deliver high-quality applications to market faster.

As well as the direct code optimization benefits, the new TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II family also provides users with an easy migration path to Altium Designer. Altium Designer includes full design support for Nios II-based systems, and the TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II embedded processor will provide direct C code-level compatibility with Altium Designer. This will enable developers to transition projects and take advantage of a unified hardware/software co-design environment that includes FPGA-based virtual instruments for interactive hardware/software debugging – what Altium calls LiveDesign – to accelerate system development. This allows designers to develop more intelligent products faster by fully utilizing the potential of high-capacity FPGA devices as a ‘soft’ system development platform, and synchronizing the design of the physical platform with the ‘embedded intelligence’ residing on the programmable devices, including FPGAs and processors.

“The Nios II embedded processor is gaining popularity as a processing solution and provides a highly optimized platform for embedded design using Altera FPGAs,” said Nick Martin, Founder and CEO, Altium. “The release of this new TASKING VX-toolset gives Nios II developers a high-quality, drop-in development alternative for demanding applications. It also opens the door to the future by allowing them to easily harness the unified development possibilities presented by our ground-breaking Altium Designer system.”

Pricing and availability
Altium’s TASKING VX-toolset for the Nios II family of embedded processes includes:
- Plug-in for Eclipse-based Nios II IDE from Altera
- C compiler
- Assembler with macro-preprocessor
- C libraries, run-time libraries, floating-point libraries
- Linker and locator

The toolset is available for immediate purchase and is priced at US$2,995. Altium is currently promoting a special introductory offer of US$1,995 for all purchases made before September 29, 2006. For further product information visit www.altium.com or go to www.altium/contacts for details of the nearest Altium sales and support center.

About TASKING
For over 25 years TASKING tools have been used by developers in many of the world’s leading organizations across a wide range of industries to meet the demands of embedded software development. World-renowned for superior compiler technology, TASKING tools offer a fully-integrated embedded software development environment and deliver all the capabilities needed for developing embedded applications, from project management, editing, and program building to compiling, optimizing, and debugging. For more information, visit http://www.altium.com/tasking/.
About Altium Designer
Altium Designer is the industry’s only electronics product development system that removes the barriers imposed by disparate design flows and unifies the different design disciplines involved in electronics product development – the design of the hardware, the programmable hardware and the embedded software. Altium Designer’s unified design environment means users can harness the potential of the latest electronics technologies, and move to a ‘soft’ design methodology without the need to acquire specialist programmable device expertise. This provides companies with increased design flexibility, reduced production costs and speeds time to market. Altium Designer also delivers the freedom to move between any device, from any vendor, at any time and lowers total cost of ownership by eliminating the need to integrate extra-cost add-ons to increase functionality, or make up a complete solution. For more information, visit http://www.altium.com/Products/AltiumDesigner/.

About Altium
Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) is the industry’s leading developer of electronic product development solutions dedicated to unifying the different design disciplines involved in electronics product development. Altium products ensure all electronic engineers, designers, developers and their organizations take maximum advantage of emerging design technologies to bring smarter products to market faster and easier. Founded in 1985, Altium is headquartered in Sydney, Australia with sales offices in the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and resellers in all other major markets. For more information, visit www.altium.com.

About the Nios II Embedded Processor
The Nios II soft embedded processor is a general-purpose 32-bit RISC CPU optimized for programmable logic and system-on-a-programmable-chip (SOPC) integration. With over 15,000 development kits sold worldwide and the world’s top 20 OEMs already using the Nios II processor, the Nios architecture is the most popular configurable soft processor available today. For more information, visit www.altera.com/nios2.

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