Media Release

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At last! Electronics designers and mechanical designers can now collaborate in real time

Altium solves 25 years of electronics design pain: designers in both worlds can now link and review designs dynamically

SYDNEY, 28 May, 2008 – Altium, the leading developer of unified electronics design solutions, has introduced technology that, for the first time, lets electronic designers fit their boards into enclosures in real time, in 3D, without guesswork. They can eliminate the numerous costly, trial-and-error, "wait-and-see" ECAD-MCAD iterations that, until now, have delayed bringing a product to market.

Electronics designers continue to seek new ways to innovate, to create the next generation of electronic products. Altium believes that a unified approach to electronics design, which now links to the MCAD world, must replace the current silo approach of loosely-connected design tools that go to making an electronic product and bringing it to market.

Being able to manipulate the enclosure and make design decisions in real time, during the electronics design process, is a crucial step forward in unifying broader product design processes with electronics design. It's now easy for electronics designers to collaborate directly with their mechanical design peers.

Building on Altium's earlier, ground-breaking real-time 3D PCB visualization technology, it's now possible to link to external STEP models from within Altium Designer to bring, for example, the model of the casing into the PCB design environment. By using the non-proprietary STEP 3D file format as a mechanism, Altium allows ECAD-MCAD collaboration

without forcing organizations to purchase costly integration add-ons or use a specific mechanical CAD package.

Altium Designer lets designers create the board shape directly from the case model, do full mechanical fit and clearance checking, and update their board design or component choice and placement to ensure a perfect fit and conformance to physical design constraints. If the mechanical designer changes the case design, this is updated within Altium Designer. The complete board design can also be output by Altium Designer as a STEP model for use by the mechanical designer.

Electronics designers can interactively adjust board layout, component placement and even component package choice to suit the proposed enclosure design. They can ensure that the PCB complies with mechanical clearance constraints – tested directly against the real enclosure design – before the board is sent for prototyping or manufacture.

This technology will significantly reduce the number of time-consuming, error-prone and costly design iterations currently necessary to close the ECAD-MCAD loop, and will, for the first time, allow real collaboration between these increasingly interdependent areas of design.

Nick Martin, CEO of Altium, said, “Electronics design companies are looking for new ways to innovate and sustain differentiation, and companies are recognizing the benefits of a unified design solution. Until now, bringing the electronics and case design together successfully has been pretty much down to guesswork and luck. That’s not a sustainable situation as we move into a new generation of electronic product development.

“Simply incrementally improving on design processes that have gone before is not enough. We really do need to change how design is done at a fundamental level. The new ECAD-MCAD collaboration capabilities of Altium Designer demonstrate what’s possible when you think beyond traditional design silos and take a unified approach to product development.”

New unified electronics design features that remove design barriers and pain

The latest version of Altium’s unified electronics design solution delivers features that cover all areas of electronics design.

At the board level, PCB-level pin swapping, auto-optimization, BGA fan out, and system-wide differential pair support make using FPGAs on a board so much easier and effective, even for those who aren't PCB design experts.

A new routing engine not only makes board design faster and easier for specialist PCB designers; when combined with the general editing environment and real-time 3D PCB visualization capabilities, it also lets those less experienced in board design turn out workable boards faster and easier.

C programmers, as well as creating application code within Altium Designer, can now create hardware directly using their existing C coding skills and link this hardware into the wider FPGA-based system. Indeed, the entire programmable design process can be done by software or board-level designers without any specific FPGA design expertise.

Ready-to-use FPGA components borrow from board design methodologies to enable functionality to be moved off the board and into the programmable domain. C-to-hardware compilation lets programmers use this FPGA hardware to accelerate application execution and define the platform on which their code runs.

Contact Altium, or go to www.altium.com/summer08 to see Altium's unified electronics design solution in action, and to book a live web demo.

ENDS

About Altium
Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) provides world-leading unified design solutions that break down the barriers to innovation, and help organizations easily harness the latest devices and technologies, to create their next generation of electronic products.

Altium's solutions are unique because they unify the separate processes of electronics design, all within a single electronics design environment, working off a single data model, which links all the aspects of electronics product design into one process.

Founded in 1985, Altium has headquarters in Sydney, Australia, sales offices in the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and resellers in all other major markets. For more information, please visit www.altium.com.

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