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Altium supports the next generation of robot designers **High school age robot designers will be able to use Altium's next generation electronics design solution to lay out circuit boards in 3D, program FPGAs, do real-time ECAD MCAD clearance checks**

SYDNEY Australia – January 5, 2009 – Altium is again sponsoring the *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC). *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a not-for-profit organization founded by inventor Dean Kamen to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. The FRC is an annual event that challenges teams of students to develop a robot in a six-week time frame using a standard kit of parts and a common set of rules.

The FRC teams, all teams of high-school students, will be able to use Altium Designer, Altium's next generation electronics design solution, to develop custom circuits and modules for their robots. They will be using the same electronics design solution used by organizations such as America's space agency NASA, green technology company Vestas, and business aircraft manufacturer Cessna. All 1,687 registered FRC teams can use Altium Designer for up to one year, so that they can gain deeper experience of next generation electronics design techniques even after the competition has finished.

Altium Designer was integral to *FIRST's* development of the new robot control system for 2009 and was used to design all of the custom electronics that go on the robot. For the first time, teams can download design files for the system and explore and modify them using Altium Designer. The designs for the power distribution panel, digital side car,

analog and solenoid breakout as well as several sensor carrier boards have all been released under a Creative Commons open source license. (Creative Commons is a non-profit corporation that allows creative work, including software, to be released in an open forum). As part of the competition rules, teams that use these designs for their own custom hardware are required to publish their modified designs, in turn creating a community of open hardware based around designs made with Altium Designer.

“This sponsorship gives students a wonderful opportunity to use a professional tool and explore their interests in electronics design,” said Gerry Gaffney, Senior Vice President & General Manager Americas, Altium. “The *FIRST* Robotics Competition is a fantastic event that promotes the advancement and appreciation of science and technology. And this is what Altium stands for. These young robot designers are the future of electronics design and Altium is very proud to be fostering their talent early in their careers.”

Altium recently announced the latest version of Altium Designer. This release introduces 40 new features and more than 230 enhancements to Altium’s electronics design solution. It continues Altium’s commitment to a six month release cycle. Features introduced include a Plug-n-Play software builder, a field dashboard for FPGA-based instruments and a new Design Release Manager, all developed to exploit advances in technology, and make getting a product to manufacture faster and easier. FRC teams can download this latest version and any later releases of Altium Designer made throughout the year. The latest release also improves the performance of Altium’s pioneering real-time 3D PCB design engine and features.

“With its generous contribution to the *FIRST* Robotics Competition at our highest Crown Supplier level, Altium makes it possible for us to turn the *FIRST* vision of inspiring young people’s interest and participation in science and technology into a reality,” said *FIRST* president, Paul R. Gudonis. “Our partnerships with innovative companies such as Altium are a major reason that *FIRST* continues to thrive.”

The FRC Championship will be held April 16-18, 2009 in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, and the 2009 season was formally launched January 3 in Manchester, New Hampshire.

ENDS

About Altium

Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) provides next-generation electronics design solutions that break down the barriers to innovation. 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, linking all aspects of electronics product design into one process. This unified design environment helps electronics designers easily harness the latest devices and technologies, manage their projects across broad design 'ecosystems', and create connected, intelligent designs.

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

About *FIRST*

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With the support of many of the world's most well-known companies, the not-for-profit organization hosts the *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge for high-school students, *FIRST* LEGO League for children 9-14 years old, and Junior *FIRST* LEGO League for 6 to 9 year-olds. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org.